1. **BACKGROUND**

To increase the probability of timely completion of PhD studies of UR staff studying abroad, selection of good candidates is key. These procedures aim to improve the selection process potential candidates.

1. **INVITATION OF APPLICATIONS**

The concerned units will make calls for applications after discussing with their collaborating partners. In addition to the needs of the concerned unit and partners, the following are necessary for the UR research quality assurance:

* 1. ***Enclosures to applications:***

Applicants shall enclose the following (certified copies where necessary and originals will be shown by the selected candidates only)

1. List of publications in journals or published conference proceedings or published books/ book chapters relevant to the candidate’s field. This must be separate from the CV
2. abstracts of a few selected publications
3. A copy of a Masters (or equivalent) certificate
4. A research Concept note of maximum 5 pages (see format below)
5. A current CV which includes a description (maximum five pages) of current research interests
   1. ***Concept Note***

Applicants will write a concept note following the format below:

**Project Title:**  (no more than 20 words)

**Budget Requested**

**Project duration**

**Name of Applicant, faculty and department**: (here include team members if applicable, e.g. assistants (if any). You can also include masters’ student (s))

**PhD Research area and Discipline:**

**Project Summary:** Here provide an overall description of your anticipated PhD research concept and what you want to achieve. Describe in general terms the problems you want to address. *(Maximum 500 words)*

**Project Problem and Out Puts:**  Description and background of the **research** problem(s) you intend to address(300 words) and descriptions **of the individual outputs you expect to realise**

**Literature Review:** Provide a description of the methodology and research approach that have been used by previous researcher on the problems you wish to research in your PhD study. Based on the reviewed literature, describe the existing knowledge and experience that you will build on from your own research or that of others, and how your PhD project will contribute to new scientific knowledge. *(500 words maximum)*

**Supervisors and Institution:** Provide information on potential Institution where you wish to register and potential supervisors (if this is available). Briefly discuss why you chose the institution and the particular supervisors. *(Maximum 100 words)*

**Expected users of the research:** Who will use your research results – during your project, and at the end? (Scientists, Policy Makers, Farmers, Community Groups, etc)  (300 words)   

**Policy implications of the research (if any):**  Please provide an indication of how your research addresses the following: (200 words maximum each section)

* How relevant are the research outputs to policy change?
* How policy can use the outputs to yield clear developmental and managerial impact?
* What likely scenarios may arise as a result of the policy change?

1. **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The following criteria will guide the selection:

1. The quality of the concept note
2. Three letters of recommendation (two from Professors in own discipline, one from immediate manager at place of work)
3. Candidates' academic merit and potential for a successful PhD Thesis (graduate record, publication record, and letters of recommendation).
4. A demonstrated ability to think and work independently and in a team.
5. **SELECTION PROCEDURE**
   1. ***Short listing***

Applications will first be sorted by the relevant unit (or Team Leaders in the case of applications supported by specific programmes) so that only applicants fulfilling the required conditions are short listed. By required conditions we mean submission of applications on time, including all the required enclosures, following the concept note format (as this is the major basis for selection, besides the interview) and have the right qualifications (e.g. Masters in the required disciplines).

* 1. ***Screening of applications by peer reviewers***
* The concerned unit (or Team Leaders in the case of applications supported by specific programmes) shall make summaries of documents of the short listed applicants. The summaries include (i) Name of applicant and code name (for anonymity), (ii) title of proposed research, discipline and area of proposed study; (iii) number of publications (iv) topic of Master’s thesis, supervisors and where (University) obtained.
* The concerned unit (or Team Leaders in the case of applications supported by specific programmes) shall submit to the College Directorate of Research and Postgraduate Studies (D-RPGS) files of each candidate containing (i) the summaries, (ii) list of publications with assorted abstracts, (iii) Concept notes (iv) 4 names of potential reviewers for each applicant at least one from UR/ Rwanda and at least one from collaborating country
* The D-RPGS will send the files to 3 reviewers (blind peer reviewing system) using UR Form20: Peer Reviewer Evaluation Form for Grants Applications.
* The D-RPGS will compile the scores and take the total sum of the three reviewers for each candidate and make a priority list basing on the score ranking. The minimum score shall be 65%.
* All those scoring above 65% will be invited to oral interviews
* The concerned unit (or Team Leaders in the case of applications supported by specific programmes) shall submit copies of all applications and all enclosed docs for safe keeping (keep originals)
  1. ***Interview panel***
* The concerned unit (or Team Leaders in the case of applications supported by specific programmes) shall convene a panel composed of experts in the area, potential supervisors from UR, or Rwanda or the region and from the collaborating University, representative of the funding agency, chaired by College D-RPGS (for local grants) or chaired by the UR-Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies for international collaborations.
* Applicants will make a presentation for 10 minutes, the panel will ask them questions for 20 minutes to elicit information on their knowledge of proposed research area, what has been done by others in that area, what they perceive they can do as contribution to knowledge but also whether the qualification they claim to have, they actually have it (not just on paper)
* The panel members shall use Form20 to award points. The average score for each candidate will be used to rank them. The minimum score is maintained at 60%
* The top scorers will be awarded the grant. In case no one attains 60% the positions will be re-advertised. In case of a tie, the potential supervisors will scrutinise further the documents and select one they perceive to be better than the other. Tie means within a difference of less than 0.5%.
* The panel will award the grants and the chairperson of the panel will announce the results in front of all panel members either by phone or directly to the applicants immediately after interviewing all candidates.
  1. ***Academic SENATE approvals***
* The minutes of the meeting and the ranked list shall be submitted to College Principal (for local grants) or Deputy VC Academic Affairs and Research for international collaborations to ratify the approvals and report at the relevant College Committee for local grants or UR-RPGS Committee for international collaborations

1. **TIMING**

The process might require at least two months in advance after receiving applications.