

2025

APPROVED PROCEDURE FOR THE INTERNAL GRANT PROGRAMME



NAXÇIVAN DÖVLƏT
UNİVERSİTETİ

Approved Procedure for the Internal Grant Programme (IGP)

Purpose

This procedure establishes the official rules, submission process, evaluation criteria, budgeting framework, and financial management principles of the Internal Grant Programme (IGP) at Nakhchivan State University (NSU). It aims to promote and support high-quality research, pedagogical innovation, service projects, and capacity-building activities undertaken by university faculty, staff, and students.

Scope

This procedure applies to all internal project proposals seeking IGP funding at NSU, including:

- Seed research grants
- Teaching innovation grants
- Equipment and infrastructure small grants
- Community and industry partnership projects

Definitions

- Principal Investigator (PI): Lead applicant responsible for project execution and financial reporting.
- Co-Investigator (Co-I): Person contributing materially to the project.
- Project Period: Approved duration of the project (typically 6–24 months).
- Direct Costs: Costs directly attributable to project activities.
- Indirect/Overhead Costs: Institutional contributions to utilities, administration, or other general expenses.

4. Programme Principles / Best Practices

The NSU IGP follows international best practices applied in leading universities:

- Open, competitive calls with transparent timelines and selection criteria.
- Evaluation through internal and, where appropriate, external peer reviewers.
- Proportionate administrative requirements (simpler for small grants, detailed for larger awards).
- Support for seed or bridge projects that may lead to external grant applications.
- Capacity-building initiatives such as grant-writing workshops.
- Strict conflict-of-interest policies and transparent panel membership.
- Staged disbursement of funds linked to milestones and progress reports.
- Reasonable institutional overheads (7–12%) and co-funding for major equipment.
- Obligatory monitoring, evaluation, and dissemination, with preference for open-access results.

Types of Internal Grants & Typical Size

- Micro/Seed Grants: 1,000–3,000 AZN - exploratory research, pilot data, teaching pilots.
- Standard Research/Teaching Grants: 3,000–20,000 AZN - small to medium-scale projects.
- Strategic/Large Grants: 20,000–50,000 AZN - multidisciplinary or infrastructure-related initiatives (require Rectorate approval).

Grant caps and currency equivalents shall be set annually by the NSU Finance Office.

Eligibility

- The PI must be a member of NSU academic or administrative staff, or a student team supervised by an NSU academic.
- Each individual may serve as PI for only one active internal grant at a time (exceptions by Rectorate).
- Proposals must align with NSU's strategic priorities (research excellence, teaching improvement, or community service).
- Co-applicants must confirm their availability and departmental support.

Call for Proposals & Timeline

- Announcements are published on the NSU website and sent to all faculties.
- Submission window: 6 weeks from the call date.
- Administrative check: 1 week.
- Peer review and evaluation: 3–4 weeks.
- Award decisions and contract negotiation: 2 weeks.
- Project start: within 4 weeks of contract signing.

Application Rules & Required Documents

Applications must include:

- a) Completed Application Form (summary, objectives, relevance).
- b) Detailed Work Plan with milestones and timeline (Gantt chart recommended).
- c) Budget (using standard NSU template).
- d) CVs of PI and key personnel (max 2 pages each).
- e) Ethics approval (if applicable).
- f) Departmental support letter (for equipment or major access).
- g) Supervisor confirmation (for student-led projects).

Formatting: single PDF, Arial/Times 11 pt, max 8 pages (excluding CVs and budget).

Budget Formulation – Rules & Best Practices

A. Budget Structure (Suggested Lines)

- Personnel (stipends, hourly wages; role, hours, rate)
- Travel (fieldwork, conferences; justification required)
- Equipment (items > AZN 2,000 require procurement justification)
- Consumables & Materials (lab supplies, software licenses)
- Subcontracts / Consultants (procurement rules apply)
- Dissemination (open access fees, workshops)
- Indirect / Overhead (up to 10% of total direct costs)
- Contingency (max 3–5%, justified)

B. Eligible / Ineligible Costs

Eligible: short-term project salaries, travel for project activities, consumables, minor equipment, dissemination costs, and event participation.

Ineligible: permanent salary top-ups, general departmental costs, building renovations, land purchases, fines, entertainment, and unjustified laptop purchases.

C. Costing Best Practices

- Use documented quotations for items > AZN 2,000.
- Apply university procurement rules and thresholds.
- Budget in AZN; if foreign currency used, provide conversion details.
- Indicate co-funding or in-kind contributions.

D. Overhead & Indirects

A maximum of 10% of total direct costs may be claimed as overhead to support institutional administration.

Submission & Administrative Check

- Proposals submitted electronically to the Grants Office by the deadline.
- Administrative check (5 working days) for format, completeness, ethics, and budget accuracy.
- Incomplete proposals may be returned once for correction within the administrative window.

Evaluation Procedures & Scoring Rubric

- Review Stages
- Administrative check.

- External peer review (1–2 reviewers for large projects).
- Internal evaluation panel (faculty and at least one external expert).
- Final approval by Grants Committee or Rectorate.

Scoring Rubric (Total: 100 points)

- Scientific/Academic Merit & Originality – 30
- Relevance to NSU Strategic Priorities / Impact – 20
- Feasibility & Methodology – 20
- Team Expertise & Capacity – 10
- Budget Realism & Value for Money – 10
- Sustainability / Potential for External Funding – 10

Thresholds & Ranking

- Minimum pass mark: 65/100 (standard grants), 75/100 (strategic grants).
- In case of ties, preference given to projects with co-funding or cross-faculty collaboration.
- Conflict of Interest & Confidentiality
- Panel members must declare conflicts and recuse themselves where applicable.
- Review comments remain confidential; applicants receive anonymized feedback.

Award Notification & Contracting

- Successful applicants receive an official award letter detailing amount, deliverables, and schedule.
- Both parties sign a Grant Agreement specifying budget, procurement rules, IP and publication policies, and sanctions for breach.
- The Finance Office issues an award code for accounting and tracking.

Disbursement & Financial Management

A. Disbursement Model

- 40% upon signing
- 40% upon mid-term progress report
- 20% upon final report and reconciliation

B. Financial Controls

- All project expenditures processed through the NSU Finance Office using award codes.
- Procurement must follow NSU rules (three quotes required for purchases above threshold).

C. Budget Changes

- Minor reallocation ($\leq 10\%$ of a line item) requires Grants Office approval.
- Larger adjustments require written request and Committee approval.

D. Unspent Funds & Overspends

- Unspent balances revert to the IGP fund unless reallocated.
- Overspends are the PI's responsibility unless prior approval obtained.

Reporting, Monitoring & Evaluation

- A. Progress Reports: Every 6 months, including narrative and financial components.
- B. Final Report: Due within 30 days after project completion; includes financial statement and outputs.
- C. Monitoring Visits: Conducted by Grants Office or panel to verify activities.
- D. Sanctions: Delays or misuse of funds result in suspension and future ineligibility.

Intellectual Property, Publications & Data Policy

- IP created through IGP projects follows NSU's IP policy (default ownership by creators; NSU retains usage rights).
- Publications must acknowledge NSU IGP funding.
- Open access and data sharing strongly encouraged.

Dissemination & Impact

- Awardees must present results at NSU Research Day or equivalent event.
- Projects must include dissemination plans (e.g., workshops or community engagement).
- Projects are expected to seek subsequent external funding.

Appeals & Complaints

- Appeals allowed for administrative or procedural issues within 10 working days of notification.
- Independent panel reviews and issues a final decision.

Recordkeeping & Transparency

- The Grants Office will maintain a complete archive of all project files.
- Annual public report summarizing funded projects (PI, title, duration, amount) will be published.

Governance & Roles

- Grants Office: manages calls, administration, monitoring, and reporting.
- Evaluation Panel: conducts peer review and scoring.
- Finance Office: handles accounting, audits, and payments.
- Rectorate: approves strategic awards and policy updates.

Capacity Building & Continuous Improvement

- Annual workshops on proposal development, budgeting, and ethics.
- Regular review of the IGP procedure to ensure compliance with evolving best practices and legislation.

Annexes

Annex A – Budget Template

Annex B – Application Form

Annex C – CV Template

Annex D – Evaluation Form and Scoring Sheet

Annex E – Grant Agreement Template

Annex F – Reporting Templates

Sample Budget Template (Annex A)

- Personnel: PI (0.1 FTE) – AZN X;
- Research Assistant (6 months) – AZN Y
- Travel: Fieldwork, conferences – AZN
- Equipment: Item name, cost, justification – AZN
- Consumables: Supplies and materials – AZN
- Consultants: Role, rate, duration – AZN
- Dissemination: Open access fees, workshops – AZN
- Overhead (10% of direct costs) – AZN
- Contingency (max 3%) – AZN
- Total Requested: AZN

Sample Evaluation Sheet (Annex D)

Reviewer: _____ | Project ID: _____

Approved by:

Rector of Nakhchivan State University

Prof. Dr. Elbrus Isayev

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