

Students' Research Projects (SRPs) Guidelines

Background:

Research is a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge, through dissemination by publication or presentation.

Since its inception, the College of Medicine-University of Bisha planned to apply the SRP in the curriculum as a pre-requisite of student graduation. The students start their individual research projects at the beginning of the fourth year and complete their research project proposals during the basic epidemiology and research course at the end of the first semester of year four. After that, the students keep working on their research projects till the end of the sixth year, where they submit their final graduation research projects at the end of the research project course.

Guidelines of the process of the SRPs implementation:

1. The students should start their research projects at the beginning of year four.
2. The mentor will be the supervisor of his/her mentees' research projects.
3. The supervisor should carry out the supervision and follow up of the research projects of his/her mentees at any time available during office hours and mentoring sessions, respectively.
4. During the Basic Epidemiology and Research course, the course coordinator will assign supervisors to check the completion of the SRPs with the students in the practical sessions of the course.
5. The supervisor should consider his/her mentees' performance in their research projects in their portfolio at the end of each course.
6. The student should use the Student-Supervisor Agreement (SSA) form (Annex.5):
 - A. To document the relationship between the supervisor, student and SRPs coordinator.
 - B. SSA format includes student's information, supervisor's information and the student's research project title.
 - C. The student should submit this agreement form, after approval of his/her supervisor, to the research coordinator as early as possible during the first month

of year four, as the priority will be given to the earlier submission in case of repetition of the title within the same batch of the students.

7. The student should select the topic of his/her research project according to the following:
 - A. The student will be responsible for presenting minimum of three research project topics to his/her supervisor.
 - B. The student with the guidance of his/her supervisor should select an appropriate, attainable and realistic research topic for his/her research project.
 - C. The supervisor should ensure that the title chosen by the student for his/her research project is not a repetition of those used in the last three academic years in UBCOM as provided by the research projects coordinator in the list of the students' researches.
 - D. Repetition of the title of research project within the same batch of the students will be avoided by accepting the first title submitted in the SSA to the research projects coordinator.
 - E. Changing of the SRP topic is unacceptable after submission of SSA and approval of the UBCOM Research Committee, only if there are very strong satisfying reasons.
 - F. If the student wants to change the topic of his/her project, he/she should provide a letter including the reasons for change of the research project topic to his/her supervisor, who should validate, accept and write an official letter to the research committee and the research coordinator to take the appropriate decision.
8. The student's final research project proposal will be assessed and examined in the Basic Epidemiology and Research course at the end of the first semester of year four.
9. The student, after his/her supervisor's signature, should submit his complete research project proposal to the UBCOM Research Committee for approval by the end of Basic Epidemiology and Research course in the first semester of year four.
10. The student should submit his/her approved research project proposal to the Research Ethics Local Committee (RELOC) at the UBCOM for ethical approval during the first course in the second semester of year four (Public health course).
11. Depending on the level of risk of the research protocol and the participant population, the UBCOM-RELOC will conduct one of the following types of review of the SRP proposal
 - A. Expedited Review:
 1. For certain kinds of research involving no more than minimal risk and for minor changes in previously approved research, the UBCOM-RELOC Chair

and a designated member or group of members will review the proposed research rather than the entire UBCOM-RELOC.

2. It cannot be assumed that research poses minimal risk because it involves only interview or survey data collection. Sensitive questions may lead to distress that exposes participants to greater than minimal risk. Loss of confidentiality can cause harm to participants, their relatives, and others. The UBCOM-RELOC determines the designation of Expedited Review.

B. Full Board Review:

1. When full board review is necessary, the research proposal is presented and discussed at a meeting at which a quorum of UBCOM-RELOC members is present.
2. For the research to be approved, it must receive the approval of a majority of those members present.
3. UBCOM-RELOC members may participate by means of electronic and/or telephonic communication and need not be present physically.

C. Research Exemptions from UBCOM-RELOC Review:

1. Certain categories of activity are considered research but may be declared exempt from review by the UBCOM-RELOC. This determination must be made by the UBCOM-RELOC prior to the research being conducted.
2. Certain low-risk research is exempt from the requirements concerning UBCOM-RELOC review and approval.
3. If a study falls into one of the exempt categories (Annex.6), researchers still have ethical responsibilities to protect participants' rights.

12. The student should consider the following during the research project data collection and analysis:

- A. The student should start data collection after ethical approval of his/her research proposal before the end of the second semester of year four and end data collection and analysis by the end of the first semester of year five.
- B. In addition to the ethical clearance letter, the student should take an official letter from the UBCOM to the respected institute to facilitate data collection of his research project.
- C. The student should validate the questionnaire and other data collection tools before data collection including electronic questionnaires and check the collected data before data entry.

- D. The student should collect the data of his/her research project under the guidance and regular contact of his/her supervisor.
 - E. The student should do data entry, use statistical software for data analysis and he can consult any expert (if needed) to complete this task with the guidance of his/her supervisor.
13. The student should consider the followings for the research project report writing and publications:
- A. The student should complete report writing of his/her research project and start writing manuscripts for publication, with guidance of his/her supervisor, by the end of the second semester of year five.
 - B. The supervisor must vet and approve his/her mentee's research project report before the student submit it to the research coordinator by the end of the first semester of year six.
 - C. The student must adhere to the research millstones plan (Annex.7) and late submission of the research project report may be dealt as per the guidelines.
 - D. The student will be assessed and examined in his/her research project report during the research project course by the end of year six.
 - E. The student must get final approval of his/her research project report from his/her supervisor and Research Project course coordinator.
 - F. The student must submit four copies of his/her approved research project report banded in blue hard cover, one for his/her supervisor, one for the research project course coordinator, one for the library (hard and soft copy) and the last one for the student him/herself.
 - G. Research project reports are exclusive rights of the UBCOM.
 - H. Publications of the research project by the student will be encouraged, before the Research Project course and will be considered positively in the final assessment of the course at the end of year six.

Annexes:

Annex (1): Student responsibility

1. Must be committed to the research project guidelines throughout the SRP milestones.
2. Work under the guidance of his/her supervisor to achieve the research project tasks within allotted time, showing punctuality, interest and responsible attitude and behavior.
3. Must avoid all types of plagiarism.

Annex (2): Supervisor role

1. Planning for the research supervision sessions with his/her mentees.
2. Supervise his/her mentees' research projects encouraging them to achieve their research tasks within designated time according to the attached Gannt chart of the research millstones plan (annex.7).
3. Consider the students' performance in the research project in each course portfolio.
4. Accept and sign his/her mentee's research proposal and research project report before submission to the UBCOM committees and the Research Project course coordinator.
5. Provide regular feedback to the UBCOM research coordinator about his/her mentees' performance in the research project and report erring students.
6. Ensure that the research proposal and report are prepared as per the requirements of the UBCOM Research Committee and RELOC, and the SRPs guidelines at UBCOM.

Annex (3): Research coordinator role

1. Provide list of the research projects conducted by the UBCOM students in the last three years for the supervisors.
2. Follow the progress of students' performance during the research project journey directly and/or with their supervisors.
3. Provide biannual report about the SRPs by the end of each semester to the department of community medicine and the academic affairs.

Annex (4): The assessment of SRPs

1. The students' performance in the research project will be considered as part of the portfolio of different courses and assessed as final assessment of the proposal and the research project report.
2. Final assessment of the students' research project proposal and research project report will be in the Basic Epidemiology course (year four) and research project course (year six) respectively.
3. The assessment of the students' research project proposal and research project report will be as per SAC policy.
 - A. Each student should present and defend his/her research project in front of the practical examination panel.
 - B. The total marks of the research project proposal is out of 20 in the Basic Epidemiology and Research course and the research project report evaluation is out of 100 in the Research Project course
 - C. The research project proposal and research project report should be evaluated by a team of examiners nominated by the department of community medicine.

Annex (5):

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Ministry of Education
University of Bisha
College of Medicine



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Students' Research Projects (SRPs)- Student Supervisor Agreement (SSA)

This form is to be filled out by the student in collaboration with his research supervisor thereafter to be submitted to the research coordinator.

Student's Information:

Name	:	.....
Academic number	:	.....
Year/Level	:	.....
Mobile number	:	.....
Email	:	.....

Research data:

Project Title	:	..... .....
<p><i>Note: In case of repetition of the title of research project within the same batch of the students, the priority will be to the first submission of this SSA.</i></p>		

This is to confirm my agreement that my research project will be conducted as per the guidelines of the Student Research Projects (SRPs) and other guidelines of UBCOM.

Student's Signature:**Date:**/...../ 20.....

Supervisor's Information:

Name	:	.....
Academic position	:	.....
Department/specialty	:	.....
Mobile number	:	.....
Email	:	.....

This is to confirm my agreement to supervise the research project of the student entitled above and to fulfill all the requirements of this job as a research supervisor.

Supervisor's Signature:**Date:**/...../ 20.....

Annex (6): Exempted Categories of Research Project From UBCOM-RELOC Review

- The following categories of human subject research are exempt from this policy:
 1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as:
 - A. Research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or
 - B. Research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
 2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - A. Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - B. Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
 3. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
 4. Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or Agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:
 - A. Public benefit or service programs;
 - B. Procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs;
 - C. Possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or
 - D. Possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.
 5. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies,
 - A. If wholesome foods without additives are consumed or
 - B. If a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe.

Annex.7: Gantt Chart

Student Research Projects (SRPs) Milestones Plan in UBCOM

Research Project Milestones	Year One		Year Two		Year Three		Year Four		Year Five		Year Six	
	Sem.1	Sem.2	Sem.1	Sem.2	Sem.1	Sem.2	Sem.1	Sem.2	Sem.1	Sem.2	Sem.1	Sem.2
Teaching theory of biostatistics												
Teaching theory of research proposal												
Teaching theory of research proposal												
Selection of research topic and complete research proposal with his supervisor and submit the Student-Supervisor Agreement (SSA)												
Practical teaching of the research and biostatistics, proposal defence, and obtaining the approval of UBCOM research committee												
Submission to the UBCOM ethical committee and obtaining the ethical clearance												
Data collection and analysis												
Complete report writing												
Approval of the SRP by the supervisor and submission to the research coordinator												
Publications of manuscripts from the SRP												
Prepare for SRP presentation												
Final examination and submission to the Research Project course coordinator												
Submission of the final four copies of the approved SRP for the college												