Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP)
“QNRF-Shell Co-funded Program”

Request for Proposal (RFP)
26th Cycle

Revised October 2019
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# 1. **Acronym List**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Award Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMG</td>
<td>Award Management Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AROR</td>
<td>Authorized Research Office Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSRF</td>
<td>Change of Status Request Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAG</td>
<td>Grant Application Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IACUC</td>
<td>Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBC</td>
<td>Institutional Bio-safety Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDC</td>
<td>Indirect cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Intellectual Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Post-Doctoral Scholar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRM</td>
<td>Primary Research Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Peer Reviewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QNRF</td>
<td>Qatar National Research Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QNRS</td>
<td>Qatar National Research Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REG</td>
<td>Research Ethics Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFP</td>
<td>Request for Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIG</td>
<td>Research Integrity Guide</td>
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<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td>Research Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>Research Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROC</td>
<td>Research Outcome Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCH</td>
<td>Supreme Council of Health (Qatar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Submitting Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDC</td>
<td>UREP Download Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UREP</td>
<td>Undergraduate Research Experience Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 2. Call Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCOPE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition opens</strong></td>
<td>30th October 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submission deadline</strong></td>
<td>Proposal submission by PRM: 9th of December 2019 (noon, Doha time). RO vetting and final submission: 16th of December 2019 (noon, Doha time).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Announcement of results</strong></td>
<td>End of April, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anticipated project start date</strong></td>
<td>Project activities cannot begin until an annex to the existing research funding agreement has been signed with the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF). This process can take 60 days from the time of the award announcement and that should be taken into consideration when preparing the application implementation timeline. Awarded UREP projects are expected to start in the following semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research areas</strong></td>
<td>Research priorities (basic, applied, experimental development/translational research) must deliver useable knowledge in the fields defined by QNRS and/or Qatar Grand Challenge areas in the short, medium, or long term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Awards budget** | One year award for a total of USD 5,000 per student (maximum 6 students) as follows:  
  - USD **1,500** per student;  
  - USD **1,000** (per student) for the mentors (student to mentor ratio not to exceed 3:1);  
  - USD **2,300** per student for equipment, materials, consumables, travel, and miscellaneous expenses;  
  - USD **200** per student for applicable indirect costs. |
| **How to apply** | Register and submit the full application through the online submission system here. The UREP Grant Application Guide (GAG-U) is available for download at www.qnrf.org; see the Download Center for the UREP. The site will be active on 30th October 2019 (noon, Doha time). |
| **QNRF program contact** | QNRF support system here |
3. BACKGROUND

The vision of Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) is to enable research and development excellence in Qatar in order to achieve a diversified and sustainable economy through the advancement of research and education by providing funding opportunities for original, competitively-selected research and development projects at all levels and across all disciplines with an emphasis on the four pillars of the Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS):

- Energy and Environment
- Computer Science and ICT
- Health
- Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

The Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP) is one of the main programs offered by QNRF and designed to fulfill its aims in developing research infrastructure in Qatar by establishing the basis of scientific research at the undergraduate level. UREP provides a great opportunity for undergraduate students to experience scientific research and to engage in the various processes to build skills essential for the professional development of the students.

QNRF and Shell Collaboration, a New Horizon for Undergraduate Research Development

In line with QNRF’s vision and Qatar’s Vision 2030, Shell and QNRF are jointly launching the UREP 24th Cycle with the aim of supporting research & development in the country. Shell is a global group of energy and petrochemical companies that has a long history of partnership with Qatar evolving around different projects related to the energy field. The partnership between Shell and Qatar does not end at the level of industrial projects, it continues to embrace many other projects pertaining to human development through the investment of human and the recruitment of well-trained and developed young scientists.

The aim of this initiative is to create a new bond between Shell and Qatar via establishing an effective cooperation between Qatar National Research Fund QNRF and Shell with regards to research and capacity building through a potential partnership to support the prestigious Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP).

4. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

UREP aims to foster research culture and develop research capacity by promoting “Learning by Doing” and “Hands-On” research activities as effective methods for undergraduate education. Students will gain experience in research with faculty members, research staff, and other students through their one year involvement in the UREP grant.
UREP program offers students and mentors opportunities to build their research experience and portfolio. Students can become potentially strong candidates for other QNRF funding programs in the future, and mentors can build their research programs while simultaneously supporting student development and personal growth.

5. **ELIGIBILITY**

5.1. **Eligibility of Submitting Institutions**

5.1.1. Institutions inside Qatar with approved Research Offices (ROs) are eligible to submit proposals.

5.1.2. Submissions should be within the research area(s) of the submitting institutions as declared by the approved ROs.

5.1.3. Authorized Research Office Representatives (ARORs) and other members of the RO are not eligible to participate in UREP projects.

5.2. **Eligibility of Participants**

5.2.1. **Eligibility of Primary Research Mentors (PRMs) and Research Mentors (RMs)**

5.2.1.1. The PRM must be affiliated with a submitting institution in Qatar and be resident in Qatar. He/she is the eligible individual to apply for UREP grants. The PRM may collaborate with other organizations located inside or outside Qatar.

5.2.1.2. An eligible PRM must hold a research-oriented doctorate or any of the approved terminal degrees as defined under the approved list of terminal degrees in Annex I.

5.2.1.3. If the PRM does not hold a terminal degree, then at least one RM must hold a research-oriented doctorate or any other approved terminal degree. All members of the mentoring team (PRM and RMs) must hold a university degree as a minimum.

5.2.2. **Eligibility of Undergraduate Students**

UREP is open to all interested undergraduate students who are registered or enrolled as full time students in an undergraduate degree program in an educational institution or university in Qatar at the time of submission of the research proposal. Students must be resident in Qatar throughout the project. If a student graduates during the course of the work on the research project, it is the responsibility of the PRM to make sure that the student will continue to participate in the project till the completion of the research work.

5.3. **Participation Constraints**

5.3.1. The student to mentor ratio in a research proposal is not to exceed 3:1, i.e. no more than three students per one mentor. **The maximum number of students per project is six.**

5.3.2. A PRM should not submit more than two UREP research proposals (even as a Research Mentor) per UREP cycle.

5.3.3. A PRM may have a maximum of three concurrently on going (not completed) UREP awarded projects for all UREP cycles. Once one of these projects is completed and its Final Report has been accepted by QNRF, then the PRM may participate in a new UREP cycle.
5.3.4. A terminated UREP awarded project remains classified as open in the tally count (three on-going projects) of the PRM(s); i.e. if the PRM terminates one project, she/he will only be allowed two on-going projects in all future UREP cycles. In the event that the PRM has three terminated projects, then she/he will not be able to submit any more UREP proposals.

5.3.5. Each student can participate in only one proposal per UREP cycle. In the event that an undergraduate student is registered in two or more proposals in the same cycle, the submitted proposals will not be processed. If the concerned PRM considers it fitting, a student may participate in two UREP awarded projects, but each project must be in a different UREP cycle. A student may not participate in more than two projects.

5.3.6. Projects may have collaborating teams from multiple institutions participating in one proposal. The PRM and RM(s) may select students from multiple institutions and will have to ensure that every student is nominated by a responsible faculty member from that student’s institution. The student to mentor ratio must not exceed 3:1 within each project.

5.3.7. Potential PFM(s) & FM(s) who have active awards with QNRF such as: PDRA and GSRA are encouraged to participate in UREP, provided that they must not be financially compensated.

5.3.8. Potential PFM(s) & FM(s) who are affiliated to a co-funding institution in UREP can participate without financial compensation.

6. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS

6.1. Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noon, Wednesday 30 of October, 2019</td>
<td>Start of online proposal submission and vetting processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon, Monday 9th of December 2019</td>
<td>Deadline for online proposal submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon, Monday 16th of December 2019</td>
<td>Deadline for RO vetting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid of January 2020</td>
<td>Ineligible proposal notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of April 2020</td>
<td>Announcement of awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2. Proposal submission flowchart

The following flowchart illustrates the steps necessary for proposal submission by the Applicant and the RO until the notification of the final award.

6.3. Proposal submission procedure

Applicants should follow all the steps for submission:

6.3.1. Applicants are required to register in QNRF website [here](#) if they are not already registered.

6.3.2. To submit the applications, please refer to the submission process guideline available at UDC [here](#).

6.3.3. Applicants must upload a “Research Plan”, the template of which is available at UDC [here](#).

Ideally, students should be involved in the proposal preparation process, to the fullest extent possible, as a learning experience in the preparation and introduction to the content of such documents. The students are expected to receive training in research methodologies and ethics, information retrieval and sharing, and scholarly communication.

The PRM is responsible for the selection of the participating undergraduate students (from his/her institution or collaborating institution through nominations), and the submission of the research proposal, the Progress and the Final Reports.
During proposal submission the PRM must select one of the two types of applications

6.3.4. New

6.3.4.1. The PRM should select “New” application, if the proposal is being submitted for the first time
6.3.4.2. New application may also include proposals that did not pass QNRF screening in previous cycles.
6.3.4.3. Previous proposals that were not awarded and are being resubmitted as “new” proposals will be disqualified during the screening.

6.3.5. Resubmission

6.3.5.1. A resubmission is a proposal that passed the QNRF screening process in the previous two cycles but was not funded. A resubmission can only be submitted one time.
6.3.5.2. The PRM should select “Resubmission” during proposal submission
6.3.5.3. The PRM should fill in the rebuttal section in the research plan addressing the peer reviewers comments. The total pages of the research plan should not exceed 12 pages including the rebuttal section.

7. BUDGET

Funds will be awarded to, disbursed and managed by the submitting institution. The expenditure will be monitored by the submitting institution and QNRF according to the Fund Management Agreement (FMA). The maximum budget for a UREP project is USD 5,000 per student broken down as follows:

7.1. Undergraduate Students’ Support: up to USD 1,500 per student disbursed as follows: 50% upon QNRF approval of the Progress Report; 50% after QNRF approval of the Final Report.

7.2. Mentor Support: up to USD 1,000 per student to the mentor. In case of more than one mentor, the amount will be divided equally among the mentors. Maximum number of students per project is six.

7.3. Expenditures and Purchases: (Optional) Up to USD 2,300 per student towards the following items:

7.3.1. Materials, consumables, and supplies (items necessary to carry out the project with unit acquisition cost of less than USD 5,000)

7.3.2. Travel cost (for conference presentations by students only) as follows:

- The cost of one trip per awarded student during a UREP Project Lifetime. Travel of the PRMs, Faculty members, Mentors shall not be covered by a UREP grant.
- The travel purpose and costs shall be restricted to only presenting the results of the UREP grant in a conference. QNRF shall not cover the cost of attending a conference without presenting in it. The RO of the Awardee shall make sure that the UREP student(s) have been accepted to present their results/abstracts in a conference, including providing necessary documentations and approvals, prior to allowing the travel. The RO of the Awardee shall submit these documentations together with the UREP student(s) presentation(s) to QNRF within the Progress/Final reports.
- Travel cost covers expenses for conference days only and in compliance with the QNRF travel policy here.
7.3.3. Miscellaneous costs

- Includes publications, communications, translation, repairs/maintenance of equipment and other costs.
- QNRF provides a list of non-allowable costs here.
- Miscellaneous Costs may be entered as a one figure in the Online Submission System.

7.4. Indirect cost (Optional): **USD 200** per student, as Indirect Cost (IDC), to be paid by QNRF to the submitting institution to cover the cost of managing the award. However, if the institution does not wish to levy IDC, then it will be added to the materials, consumables, and supplies cost which will add up to a maximum of USD 2,500 per student. The submission channel will ask the PRM to indicate whether or not his/her institution will levy IDC and will calculate the maximum allowable expenditure fund accordingly.

8. **SCREENING**

All submitted proposals are subject to screening by QNRF according to the screening process outlined at link before they can proceed to the Evaluation stage.

9. **EVALUATION**

9.1. **Proposal Review and Ranking**

The proposal review and ranking process is comprised of a peer review by international experts, followed by a programmatic review by QNRF. These processes are detailed below.

9.1.1. **Peer Review**

Up to three qualified, international, peer reviewers are solicited by QNRF to evaluate each proposal against a set of criteria. The reviewers will score the proposals, make recommendations to QNRF as to “fund” or “not fund,” and provide narrative feedback to applicants. The following are the evaluation criteria:

- **Anticipated benefit to the undergraduate student (Excellent; Very Good; Good; Fair; Poor)**
  
  This criterion addresses how well the proposed activity advances discovery and understanding while promoting research training, and learning. It includes an assessment of the nature of tasks to be performed by the students, tasks designed to generate students’ own data/findings, the anticipated student learning, student outputs, final student product, and the anticipated level of researcher-student interactions.

- **Anticipated benefit in creating a research culture in Qatar (Excellent; Very Good; Good; Fair; Poor)**
  
  This criterion addresses how the students’ participation in the project can enhance the creation of a research culture in terms of work and research ethics, innovation and intellectual property, scholarly interactions, professional growth for the students, etc.

- **Intellectual merit of the proposed activity (Excellent; Very Good; Good; Fair; Poor)**
  
  This criterion addresses how significant are the research objectives in advancing knowledge in terms of relevance and importance of the projected results to the problems in the specific research area and its wider field? How relevant, comprehensive, and up-to-date is the literature cited? How significant is the envisaged outcome in addressing priority issues, including QNRS, in areas that are critical to Qatar.
• **Mentoring and supervisory plan (Excellent; Very Good; Good; Fair; Poor)**

This criterion addresses the time schedule of the project with the scheduled plans for the mentoring and supervisory roles by the PRM and RM(s). The plans should ensure the development of student-researcher interaction and growth and development of the student in the field of science. They should also include plans for program evaluation during the time scheduled for the project.

9.1.2. **Addition of Bonus Points to the Scientific/Technical Peer Review Scores**

Research proposals that ensure collaborative mentorship of students with one or more institutions in Qatar will receive 1 Bonus Point added to the final score. Collaboration with non-academic institutions (e.g. industry) will receive 2 Bonus Points. In case of collaboration with both academic and non-academic institutions, the proposal will receive the maximum of 2 Bonus Points.

9.1.3. **Programmatic Review**

Following the peer-review evaluation, QNRF will shortlist top-scoring proposals. Subsequent to that, expert panels will perform a programmatic review under the supervision of QNRF. The programmatic review is designed to assess and compare all proposals in a given science area. It takes into account the peer reviewers’ comments as well as the programmatic and strategic goals of QNRF related, but not limited, to: alignment with QNRS goals, quality of collaboration, past performance of PRMs, reasonableness of the budget, etc. The programmatic review provides coverage of all aspects of interest and ensures a balanced and equitable outcome.

At the end of the review and ranking processes, proposals are categorized in terms of their competitiveness. The final funding decision will group proposals as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Evaluation Outcome</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Highly Competitive</td>
<td>The proposal was evaluated to be an excellent research project during the peer-review process (with minor to negligible weaknesses) and is, therefore, considered “highly competitive” for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Competitive – Awarded</td>
<td>The proposal was evaluated to be a very good research project during the peer-review process (with moderate to minor weaknesses) and is, therefore, considered “competitive” for funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Not Competitive</td>
<td>The proposal was considered “not competitive” for funding, due to moderate to significant weaknesses identified by the review process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Not Shortlisted</td>
<td>The proposal was not shortlisted and is considered “not competitive” for funding due to significant weaknesses or shortcomings identified by the review process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. **POST AWARD**

For rules and regulations related to pre-funding, fund management, payment schedule and reporting, please refer to the Institutions responsibilities and post award document available at UDC [here](#).

11. **RESEARCH ETHICS AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

Please refer to the Research Ethics and Regulatory Requirements document available at [here](#).

12. **RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

For further information regarding research integrity and other related policies, please see the RIG [here](#) and the REG [here](#).

13. **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY**

QNRF will follow the Qatar Foundation (QF) IP policy. Please consult the QNRF website for details on the applicable intellectual property policy [here](#).

14. **INQUIRIES**

For any inquiry regarding this RFP and the electronic proposal submission process that is not already answered in the Q&A section of the QNRF-UREP webpage [here](#), please use the QNRF Support link [here](#). Applicants can choose the appropriate department and specify the topic of their query for further information. QNRF’s response may be made publicly available in the Q&A section of the QNRF website.
Annex I: Approved List of Terminal Degrees

Terminal Academic Research Degree: in academic fields the typical terminal degree is the Ph.D. (or doctorate). Typical list of terminal academic research degrees include:

- Doctor of Arts (DA)
- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
- Doctor of Canon Law (JCD)
- Doctor of Design (DDes)
- Doctor of Education (EdD)
- Doctor of Engineering (DEng/Dr. Eng./Engd)
- Doctor of Information Technology (DIT)
- Doctor of Laws (LLD) (In the USA, the LLD is only awarded as an honorary degree.)
- Doctor of Juridical Science (JSD/SJD) (In the USA)
- Doctor of Management (DM)
- Doctor of Medicine (MD, in the USA)
- Doctor of Music (DMus)
- Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D. or DPhil)
- Doctor of Professional Studies (DPS)
- Doctor of Science (DSc)
- Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci)
- Doctor of Public Health (DrPH, DPH)
- Doctor of Theology (Thd or DTh)
- Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM)*

* Applicants with DVM may participate as PRMs on a case by case basis subject to QNRF approval based on track record of research experience, and publications. To apply; applicants with DVM should submit, two weeks before the application deadline, a request for consideration to act as a PRM attaching their CV through the support system here, by selecting “UREP” department under “Funding Program (Pre Award).”

Other Approved Terminal Degrees:

- Master of Fine Arts (MFA)
- Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS)
- Master of Library Science (MLS)
- Master of Architecture (MArch)
- Master of Design (MDes)
- Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA)
- Master of Urban Design (MUD)
- Master of Product Design (MPD)