

IRQUE - QEF



Ministry of Higher Education

Quality Enhancement Fund (QEF) – Batch 3

Guidelines for Proposal Submission
December 2007



Improving Relevance & Quality
of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) Project

Ministry of Higher Education
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INTRODUCTION

The Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) Project of the Ministry of Higher Education composed of two main components:

1. Building Institutional Capacity in the Higher Education system;
2. Improving Relevance and Quality of Higher Education by establishing a Quality Enhancement Fund (QEF).

A premier feature of the project is the introduction of, for the first time in Sri Lanka, a competitive funding scheme through QEF. The proposed competitive scheme of funding is aimed at improving undergraduate education by addressing issues such as internal and external efficiency, quality enhancement of teaching and learning process, relevance of current academic offerings etc.

Two rounds of the competition were already conducted in 2005 and 2006 respectively. In the first batch 17 grants were awarded while in the second batch 10 grants were awarded.

For the 3rd round of competition, proposals are invited from the eligible faculties/campuses/institutions of Arts, Social Sciences, Aesthetic Studies and Humanities of public universities. Improvement plan should be for a period of one and half years and upto SL Rs. 20 million will be awarded for each grant. However, the first 3 proposals that score the highest marks will be eligible for grants up to SL Rs. 25 million.

J.L. Ratnasekera
QEF Coordinator
IRQUE Project

December 2007.

1. ELIGIBILITY

Assistance from the QEF is available for properly designed proposals submitted by the faculties, campuses or institutions of Arts, Social Sciences, Aesthetic Studies and Humanities of public universities. However, the faculties that have received two or more grants at the departmental or faculty level in the first two rounds of QEF competition would NOT be eligible to apply for grants. Further, the eligibility will be limited to existing study programs whose first intake of students was before 2005/2006.

In the first two rounds of QEF competition, the selected study programs had to go through the external quality assessments conducted by the Quality Assurance & Accreditation (QAA) Council of the UGC. Similarly, all the departments within the faculties will be required to submit their Self Evaluation Report to the QAA Council within 6 months after the commencement of the project. Failure to do so will lead to the suspension of the grant.

A maximum of SL Rs. 20 million will be awarded for each grant. However, the first 3 proposals that score the highest marks will be granted upto Rs. 25 million.

2. SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Analysis & Problem Identification

The accurate identification of the roots of the problems is an important step towards developing a proposal. The identified problems should be clearly defined and based on thorough analysis of data and not just on anecdotal, hypothetical or speculative judgments.

2. Relevance & Quality Enhancement

Relevance could be defined as the responsiveness to the social demand and labour market needs, and the faculties are encouraged to make their courses more demand driven. The proposal should demonstrate how the proposed activities would provide graduates with knowledge, capabilities, skills and attitudes required by the labour market and the society. Continuous quality improvement is also a major objective of the project and therefore any activity in this regard will be highly appreciated.

3. Institutional Commitment, Feasibility & Implementability

Institutional commitment is demonstrated by the provision of tangible support to the proposed plan (e.g. qualified and experienced team, adequate fund to augment support, access to the available data and information, additional space to carry out the activities etc.) The proposal should justify the activities in terms of its feasibility and implementability. Aspects need to be carefully considered are, among others, the availability of physical and human resources, time constraints, the availability of required conditions and other limitations due to external factors.

4. Efficiency & Effectiveness

The proposal should demonstrate how the proposed activities would improve efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency is defined as the relationship between input

and process that shows the degree of the proposed plan's frugality in using resources, while the effectiveness is defined as the relationship between process and output showing the results of a process using specified resources to achieve the objectives. The proposed budget should be based on solid rationale reflecting an efficient and effective use of proposed investment as well as the existing resources to achieve the objectives.

3. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection of proposals involves two steps, i.e. Desk Evaluation and Site Visit. Both evaluations will be carried out by a panel of 3 or more reviewers, appointed by the PPDU/IRQUE Project with the approval of the UGC/Ministry. The reviewers will be selected from among those who have experience in the first two rounds of QEF competition. However, reviewers will not be allowed to evaluate the proposals submitted by his/her own university. If necessary, further reviewer training will be organized by the PPDU.

Passing Requirements

The minimum requirements for a proposal to be accepted for funding are as follows:

- 50% for each criterion (at least 3 marks on a 5 point scale, for each criterion)
- and
- 70% for the total score (total score > 350 out of a maximum of 500)

4. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Improving Curriculum for Relevance and Quality Enhancement
 - Curriculum Review/Amendments
 - Technical Assistance (Consultancy Services)
 - Staff Training on Curriculum Development & Review
- Improving Teaching and Learning Process
 - Purchase of Teaching Equipment
 - Purchase of Laboratory/IT Equipment
 - Purchase & Development of Teaching Materials
 - Staff Training leading to Enhanced Teaching & Learning Techniques
- Improving Student Learning Environment and Welfare Services
 - Upgrading *existing* libraries, laboratories, lecture theatres etc.
 - Upgrading *existing* hostel facilities, canteen facilities, sanitary facilities, sports facilities etc.

5. ELIGIBLE COST COMPONENTS

The budget ceiling for the grant for each faculty is *SL Rs. 20,000,000*. It is strongly recommended that the proposal must consider the institutional commitment and capacity in proposing the budget and not merely based on the allowable ceiling. The proposals should be accompanied by strong arguments and justifications of their needs. The eligible expenditures to be proposed in this project are described in the following sections.

Staff Development (SD)

Staff Development (SD) may include the *short-term non-degree training* programs aimed at improving the quality and relevance of undergraduate study programs. For example, SD may include training programs leading to

- improved curriculum
- enhanced teaching and learning techniques
- enhanced university-industry linkages etc.

SD may also be used to support non-degree programs such as internship, short-term training on enhancement of the skills of academic and non-academic staff, seminars/conferences/workshops etc. It is expected that for international seminars and conferences, the grantee would present his/her paper at the occasion.

When providing short-term training programs, it is strongly recommended to consider the staff strength of the faculty so that the activities of the study program would not be hampered. The proposed *budget for this component should not exceed 20%* of the total budget and the training period should be limited to a maximum of one month.

Equipment (EQ)

The project would support upgrading any laboratories and modernizing teaching & learning equipment. Support for repairing, upgrading and/or procuring new equipment may be proposed under this component. Procurement of teaching aids could also be included. Procurement of equipment solely to support research activities of the staff would not be allowed. The proposed *budget for this component should not exceed 40%* of the total budget.

Upgrading Facilities (UF)

The civil works to be carried out under the project will be limited to renovation or upgrading of the existing physical facilities. *It is recommended that upgrading of student learning environment and the student welfare facilities are given high priority.* Purchase of land and the construction of new buildings would not be eligible.

Furniture purchases eligible to be proposed are limited to classroom, laboratory and student welfare purposes. Limited furniture for the institutional support unit(s) may also be proposed.

Teaching Materials (TM)

This component aims to strengthen and improve the teaching and learning process by providing support to develop teaching and learning materials as well as to procure textbooks and other related learning materials (e.g. journals, magazines, software/CDs, microfiche etc.).

Technical Assistance (TA)

International and domestic consultancies may be proposed to improve the program management, to assist in planning and strategy development, for curriculum development and for other academic activities that directly benefit the undergraduate study program. Proponent must abide by the terms of the *Guidelines on the Use of Consultants by IBRD* in the hiring of consultants to perform technical assistance.

Program Development (PD)

Activities that fall under this component are as follows.

- Workshops/Seminars
- Study Tours/Field Visits/Excursions
- Cultural/Sports and other Extra Curricular Activities
- Staff and Student Exchange Programs

Activities categorized under PD should also be aimed at improving quality and relevance of undergraduate study program. However, since such activities would require a significant amount of staff time, the *budget allocated for this component should not exceed 20%* of the total budget.

Project Management (PM)

This component would support the management and administration of the project at the faculty and university level. PM could include the cost of utilities and consumables of the project office as well as the allowances for those involved in the project work. The proposed *budget for this component should not exceed 5%* of the total proposed investment.

6. STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSAL

The Proposal should be limited to a maximum of 30 pages (including appendices) printed in A-4 paper format, single spaced using Times New Roman font (font-size – 12).

Layout of the Proposal

1. Background
2. Summary of Analysis & Identified Problems
3. Improvement Plan
4. Performance Targets

5. Appendices: Table 1 – Overall Activity Plan
 Table 2 – Proposed Budget
 Table 3 – Performance Indicators

Chapter 1: Background (max 2 pages)

This chapter should provide a brief description of the university and the faculty along with a brief summary of the program(s) offered by the faculty. Briefly describe the vision and mission of the faculty. Also, explain how the proposed plan relates to the university goals and objectives. A brief description of the implementation mechanism (if selected for funding) including the organizational structure should also be presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Summary of Analysis & Identified Problems (max 3 pages)

A summary of SWOT and other strategic/situational analysis should be presented in this chapter. If necessary, a more elaborate analysis could be included as an appendix. The problem identification should be based on the thorough analysis of data and other available information, and it is important that identified *roots of the problems* are clearly presented.

Chapter 3: Improvement Plan (max 15 pages)

All activities proposed to address the identified problems should be presented in this chapter and the following format should be used in describing each proposed activity.

Name of Activity:

Background

Describe briefly the identified problems pertinent to the planned activity. This may also include analysis regarding why the problems had occurred and what possible solutions to them. The link between the planned activities and the problem analysis presented in chapter 2 should be explicitly stated.

Rationale

Discuss briefly, but in sufficient detail, how the activity would possibly resolve the problems referred in the background section or how the activity will achieve the objective(s). Empirical or theoretical facts can be used as a ground to support the argument.

Objective(s) and Strategy

State clearly the objective(s) of this activity, including the intended outcomes and targeted beneficiaries. Description should clearly present all direct as well as indirect benefits to the academic community.

Mechanism and Design

Explain how the activity, including its sub-activities if any, will be set up and how it will be implemented under a given time frame. Each activity can be broken down into several sub-activities that together will form a coherent program to address the issue.

Resources Required

Explain additional resources and investments needed from the project and other sources to implement the activity. If there are any additional investments required from outside the project, describe clearly all past and future investment from that other sources. For each activity provide detail of resources required using the following table.

Table A.1. Resources Required for the Activity A

Activity A: (name of activity)					
No	Sub-Activity	Resources Required	Estimated Cost & Source of Funding		Cost Component †
			QEF	Other	
1.	Sub-Activity A1	A1.1.			Select any of the 7 eligible Cost Components that is most relevant
		A1.2.			
		A1.3.			
		A1.4.			
	Sub Total A1				
2.	Sub-Activity A2	A2.1.			
		A2.2.			
	Sub Total A2				
3.	Sub-Activity A3	A3.1.			
		A3.2.			
Total Activity A:					

† Eligible cost components are: Staff Development (SD), Equipment (EQ), Upgrading Facilities (UF), Teaching Materials (TM), Technical Assistance (TA), Program Development (PD) and Project Management (PM) as described in Chapter 6.

Implementation Schedule

Provide a detailed time schedule for the implementation of the activity and sub-activities, from the procurement of goods and services to the implementation of the activity using the following table as a guideline.

Table A.2. Implementation Schedule for the Activity A

ACTIVITY A: (NAME OF ACTIVITY)								
No.	Sub-Activity	Detailed Sub-Activity	Year 1				Year 2	
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
1.	A1	A1.1.						
		A1.2.						
		A1.3.						
2.	A2	A2.1.						
		A2.2.						

Performance Indicators

A set of indicators will be used to measure the performance of the program. Each indicator will be measured at least two times, before the commencement of the project (baseline) and at the final point. Performance indicators must be provided using the standardized format as shown in Table A.3. Baseline value should be provided based on a data acquisition conducted before the commencement of the project, using a sound methodology. In the case that no data is available for the baseline, data collection/survey should be conducted within 3 months after the commencement of the project.

Table A.3. Performance Indicators of Activity A

INDICATORS	BASELINE	FINAL	METHODOLOGY
<i>Main Indicators</i>			
Main Indicator 1			
Main Indicator 2			
<i>Auxiliary indicators</i>			
Aux Indicator A1			
Aux Indicator A2			

Sustainability

Describe how this activity will be sustained after the period of this project. Aspects described should include its financial implication, allocation of resources to support this activity implementation of good practices, and management commitment.

Person in Charge

Provide the name and designation of the staff member(s) who will be responsible for the implementation of this activity.

Chapter 4: Performance Targets (max 3 pages)

A set of indicators will be used to measure the performance of the study program. Each indicator will be measured at least two times, before the commencement of the project (baseline) and at the final point. Proposing study program must provide indicators by using the standardized format depicted in Table 3 in the Appendices. Baseline should be filled out based on a data acquisition conducted before the commencement of the project using a sound methodology. In the case a reliable baseline is not available at the time of preparing the document; it has to be collected within 3 months after the grant contract is signed.

Methodologies to measure each indicator and to obtain the data have to be clearly described in this section. Reviewers will use this methodology to judge whether the prescribed figures are actually reliable. For each indicator, describe all activities that will be carried out to achieve the stated target. It may be the case that one activity is relevant to more than one indicator and such a cross-reference should be clearly presented.

Graduates’ GPA is intended to roughly measure the quality of graduates of a study program. Targets for this indicator may be presented as the average GPA or as the proportion of graduates with GPA in a certain interval. The baseline data must include at least all graduates in the last three years at the time of measurement.

Students’ English Proficiency should be measured through a standard test developed by the university or faculty.

Students’ Computer Skills should be measured through a standard test developed by the university or faculty.

Drop-out Rate measures the proportion of drop-outs to the number enrolled in last 3 years.

In addition to the above indicators, it is strongly suggested to develop auxiliary indicators appropriate for the study program.

Appendices

The proposal should contain the following tables (Tables 1-3) as appendices. Any other tables/graphs that the proponent may consider relevant could also be included as appendices. However the proposal should not exceed 30 pages including the appendices.

Table 1. Overall Activity Plan

No.	ACTIVITY	SUB-ACTIVITY	YEAR 1				YEAR 2	
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
1.	A	A1.						
		A2.						
		A3.						
2.	B	B1.						
		B2.						

Table 2. Proposed Budget

No.	ACTIVITY/ SUB- ACTIVITY	SD		EQ		UF		TM		TA		PD		PM		TOTAL	
		QEF	Other	QEF	Other	QEF	Other	QEF	Other	QEF	Other	QEF	Other	QEF	Other	QEF	Other

Table 3. Performance Indicators

INDICATORS	BASELINE	FINAL	METHODOLOGY
<i>Main Indicators</i>			
Graduates' GPA			
Students' English Proficiency			
Students' Computer Skills			
Drop-out Rate			
<i>Auxiliary Indicators</i>			
Aux Indicator 1			
Aux Indicator 2			

7. SCHEDULE FOR THE COMPETITION

ACTIVITY	TO BE COMPLETED
Invitations for Proposals	December 15, 2007
Training on Proposal Writing	January 2008
Training of Reviewers	January 2008
Submission of Proposals	February 15, 2008
Desk Evaluation	February 2008
Site Visits	March 2008
Announcements	March 2008
PIP Preparation	April 2008
World Bank NOL	April 2008
Award of Grants	May 2008

8. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

The proposal with a covering letter signed by the Vice Chancellor must be received by the PPDU/IRQUE project *on or before February 15, 2008*. Proposals received beyond that date or sent by e-mail will not be considered. Submission can be done in person, by messengers or by mail. In case of mailed proposals, they must be received on the same date as the deadline at the latest. Proponents are strongly encouraged to submit their proposals in advance of the deadline.

Proposals should be submitted in their final form, and no additional written or other information will be considered in the evaluation process.

Proposals should be submitted in **5 (five) hard copies** and **1 (one) soft copy** in CD to the following address.

Project Director
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