Research Grant Administration and Monitoring Framework (GAF)

ORYX UNIVERSITY

In Partnership with Liverpool John Moores University

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Version History

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Date
Version 1.0	Dr. Maher Salem	Created the first version	19 May 2026

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1. Preamble and Guiding Principles

1.1 Purpose

The University Grant Administration and Monitoring Framework (GAF) establishes a consistent, transparent, and supportive approach to managing externally funded research grants. The framework balances three imperatives:

1. **Compliance:** Meeting all funder, legal, and institutional requirements
2. **Researcher Autonomy:** Respecting principal investigators' academic freedom and professional judgment
3. **Institutional Oversight:** Ensuring responsible use of university resources and reputation

1.2 Guiding Principles

Principle	Meaning
Proportionality	Monitoring intensity matches grant size, risk, and complexity
Transparency	All requirements and processes are documented and communicated in advance
Low Friction	Administrative burden on researchers is minimized
Supportive, Not Surveillance	RKEO exists to enable research success, not to police researchers
Risk-Based	Higher-risk grants receive more oversight; low-risk grants receive less
Continuous Improvement	Framework evolves based on researcher feedback and lessons learned

1.3 Core Philosophy Statement

"The RKEO office is a partner in research success, not an auditor of research activity. This framework exists to protect researchers from compliance failures, to connect them with institutional resources, and to ensure the university meets its obligations to funders. It does not exist to micromanage or second-guess researcher judgment."

2. Definitions

Term	Definition
Awarded Grant	Any externally funded research project administered through the university, including contracts, cooperative agreements, fellowships, and sub-awards
Compliance Event	Any required action with a fixed deadline (e.g., progress report, financial report, UREC renewal, no-cost extension request)

Funder	External entity providing funding (e.g., QRDI, QNRF, industry partner, international agency)
High-Risk Grant	Grants with any of: >500,000 QAR total value; human subjects research; export-controlled data; industry partner with IP terms; first-time PI; sub-awards to external entities
Low-Risk Grant	Grants with none of the above characteristics; typically small, unfunded or minimally funded (<100,000 QAR) collaborations
Material Change	Any change to scope, budget, timeline, personnel, or institution that requires funder approval
Medium-Risk Grant	Grants between low and high risk; moderate budget, standard terms, experienced PI
PI (Principal Investigator)	Faculty member with primary responsibility for technical and administrative performance of the grant
RKEO	Research, Knowledge & Enterprise Office – the central administrative unit for research grants

3. Scope and Applicability

3.1 In Scope

- All externally funded grants administered by the university, regardless of value or duration
- All PIs, co-Is, research staff, and students working on awarded grants
- All phases of the grant lifecycle (pre-award, active, close-out)

3.2 Out of Scope

- Internally funded research (university seed grants, faculty development awards) – *see separate policy*
- Unfunded collaborations or memoranda of understanding
- Grants administered by other institutions where the university is a sub-awardee (oversight resides with prime institution, but university RKEO maintains minimum monitoring)

3.3 Exceptions

- Exceptions to this framework require written approval from RKEO Director and are documented in the grant file
- Requests for exceptions must be submitted at least 30 days before the proposed deviation

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Principal Investigator (PI)

Responsibility	Frequency
Submit required reports to funder by deadlines	Per funder schedule
Notify RKEO of any material change within 5 business days	As needed
Maintain accurate records of expenditures, data, and deliverables	Ongoing
Respond to RKEO monitoring requests within 10 business days	As needed
Acknowledge university and funder in all publications and presentations	As applicable
Complete any required compliance training (e.g. Ethics)	Per training schedule
Minimum collaboration tool expectation: Maintain accessible record of project tasks, milestones, and progress (tool chosen by PI, but RKEO must have read-only access)	Ongoing

4.2 RKEO Director

Responsibility	Frequency
Oversee implementation and continuous improvement of this framework	Ongoing
Approve exceptions and risk classifications	As needed
Escalate unresolved compliance issues to Management	As needed
Report annually to President on grant portfolio health	Annually

4.3 RKEO Grants Manager (*Future Role*)

Responsibility	Frequency
Maintain centralized grant tracking system (dashboard)	Daily
Calculate and communicate compliance deadlines to PIs	Monthly
Conduct risk assessment for each new award	At award acceptance
Schedule and conduct monitoring check-ins per risk level	Per Section 6
Maintain grant files (digital)	Ongoing
Liaise with Finance, IT, Legal, and Management as needed	As needed

4.4 IT Department

Responsibility	Frequency
Provide and maintain collaboration tools within O365 ecosystem	Ongoing

Grant RKEO read-only access to approved tools upon request	Within 5 business days
Ensure data security and institutional data sovereignty	Ongoing
Respond to tool access requests from RKEO and PIs	Within 3 business days

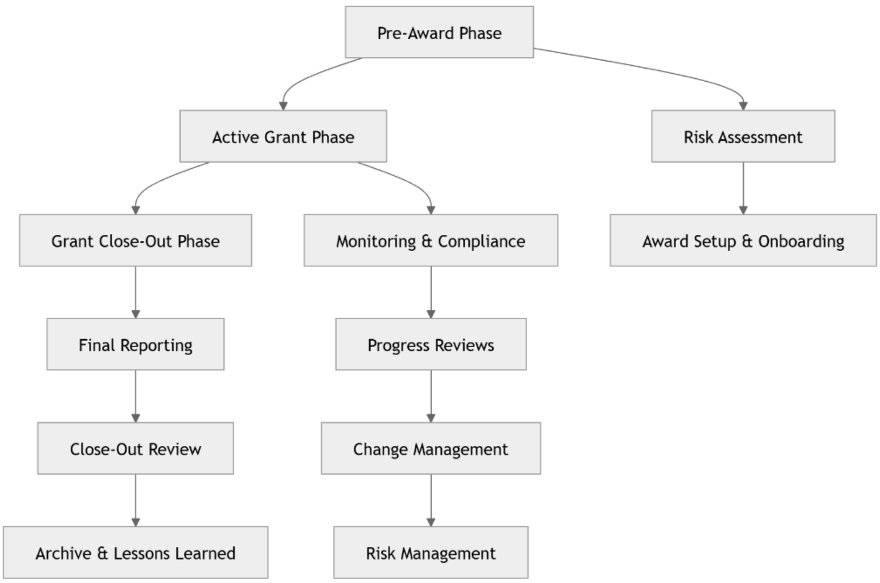
4.5 Finance Department

Responsibility	Frequency
Provide expenditure reports to RKEO and PI	biannually
Flag unusual or disallowed expenditures to RKEO	Within 3 business days of identification
Process funder drawdowns and financial reports	Per funder schedule

5. Pre-Award Phase

5.1 Grant Administration Framework (GAF) Lifecycle Overview

The Grant Administration Framework (GAF) follows a structured lifecycle approach to support the effective management, monitoring, and successful completion of externally and internally funded research projects. The framework is organized into three main phases: **Pre-Award, Active Grant,** and **Grant Close-Out**. Each phase contains specific processes, responsibilities, and monitoring activities designed to ensure compliance with funder requirements, promote responsible stewardship of research funds, mitigate institutional risk, and maximize research impact. The diagram below provides a high-level overview of the grant lifecycle and the relationship between the key phases of the framework.



5.2 Intake and Risk Assessment

Upon notification of a successful grant award, RKEO director (in future the Grants Manager) completes a **Risk Assessment Form (Appendix A)** :

Risk Factor	Low Risk (0 pts)	Medium Risk (1 pt)	High Risk (2 pts)
Total award value	<100,000 QAR	100,000-500,000 QAR	>500,000 QAR
PI experience	>5 prior grants	1-5 prior grants	First-time PI
Funder type	Internal / unfunded	Local (QRDI, QNRF)	International / industry
Human/animal subjects	None	Deferred review	Full board
Export control / ITAR	None	Restricted data	Controlled/unclassified
Sub-awards	None	One domestic sub	Multiple or international

Scoring and classification:

Total Score	Risk Level	Monitoring Intensity
0-2	Low	Annual check-in only
3-5	Medium	Quarterly check-in
6+	High	Monthly check-in + supplemental oversight

5.3 Award Acceptance and Setup

Within 10 business days of award notification:

Step	Responsible	Output
1. Verify award terms against institutional policy	RKEO Director	Exception memo (if needed)
2. Create grant record in central tracking system	RKEO Director	Grant ID, folder structure
3. Calculate all compliance deadlines	RKEO Director	Deadline calendar
4. Schedule monitoring check-ins per risk level	RKEO Director	Meeting invitations
5. Send Welcome Packet to PI	RKEO Director	PI acknowledgment
6. Establish RKEO read-only access to PI's chosen collaboration tool	IT + PI	Access confirmed

5.4 PI Welcome Packet Contents

The Welcome Packet includes:

- Copy of this framework
- Risk classification and monitoring schedule
- Deadline calendar for first 12 months
- RKEO contact information
- Collaboration tools guidelines (Section 8)
- RKEO read-only access request form
- Acknowledgment of receipt form (to be signed and returned)

6. Active Grant Phase: Monitoring Framework

6.1 Monitoring by Risk Level

- **Low-Risk Grants (Annual Check-in)**

Activity	Timing	Format
Annual progress review	Within 30 days of grant anniversary	30-minute virtual meeting
Compliance deadline check	Automated via central tracking	Email reminder only
Financial review	Via Finance reports	No active RKEO review unless flagged

No RKEO read-only access required for low-risk grants, though PI may voluntarily share.

- **Medium-Risk Grants (Quarterly Check-in)**

Activity	Timing	Format
Quarterly progress review	Within 15 days of quarter end	45-minute meeting (virtual or in-person)
Compliance deadline check	Monthly automated + RKEO manual check	Email + dashboard
Financial review	Monthly report review	RKEO reviews Finance reports
RKEO read-only access required	Within 30 days of award start	To PI's chosen collaboration tool

- **High-Risk Grants (Monthly Check-in)**

Activity	Timing	Format
Monthly progress review	Within 10 days of month end	60-minute meeting (in-person recommended)
Compliance deadline check	Bi-weekly	RKEO proactive outreach
Financial review	Real-time (via shared budget tracking)	RKEO + Finance joint review
RKEO read-only access required	Within 15 days of award start	To PI's chosen collaboration tool
Additional risk mitigation plan	Within 45 days of award start	Documented in grant file

6.2 Standard Check-in Agenda (All Risk Levels)

The following template will be used for all monitoring meetings:

```
RKEO Grant Check-in Meeting Agenda

Grant ID: [XXXX]

PI: [Name]

Date: [Date]

1. Opening (2 minutes)

   - Confirm no urgent compliance or financial issues

2. Progress Against Plan (10-20 minutes depending on risk)

   - PI: 2-3 minute verbal update
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   - RKEO: Review read-only task tracker
   - Discussion of any deviations from original timeline
3. Compliance Check (5-10 minutes)
   - Upcoming deadlines in next 60 days
   - Any material changes to report to funder?
   - UREC status (if applicable)
4. Financial Status (5 minutes for medium/high risk only)
   - Burn rate vs. plan
   - Any unusual expenditures?
5. Support Needed (5 minutes)
   - What does PI need from RKEO?
   - What does RKEO need from PI?
6. Action Items and Next Steps (3 minutes)
   - Document decisions and assignments
7. Close
   - Schedule next check-in
```

6.3 Read-Only Access Protocol

Purpose: RKEO read-only access enables non-intrusive monitoring without burdening the PI with additional reporting.

How to request read-only access:

1. PI shares the specific OneDrive-Folder/SharePoint/Teams item with RKEO
2. IT confirms access within 5 business days
3. RKEO acknowledges receipt to PI

What RKEO will NOT do with read-only access:

- Edit, delete, or modify any content
- Add comments or tasks
- Share access with third parties
- Use access for purposes beyond grant monitoring
- Access outside business hours (8am-6pm) except for urgent compliance matters

Revocation of access: PI may revoke read-only access at any time by consulting with the RKEO director and provide reasonable justification, after which the grant's risk classification will be reviewed and may be elevated.

6.4 Deviation and Change Management

All changes to an awarded QRDI-funded project must be assessed against the approved proposal, budget, timeline, and scope of work. Any deviation must follow institutional and funder approval pathways. The PI remains responsible for ensuring compliance, while RKEO acts as the coordinating and compliance support office.

A. Minor Deviations (Institutional Notification Only – No Funder Approval Required)

The following changes may be processed internally **without prior QRDI approval**, provided they do not alter the project scope, objectives, or total awarded budget:

- Personnel changes within approved roles (e.g., replacement of RA or Co-I with equivalent expertise)
- Internal budget transfers **within approved budget categories and limits allowed by QRDI financial rules**
- Short administrative or operational schedule adjustments (typically **up to 30 calendar days**, if no impact on milestones or deliverables)
- Minor adjustments to methodology that do not affect objectives or outcomes

Process Requirement

- PI must notify RKEO within **10 working days** of the change
- PI/RKEO records the change in the **official grant file and monitoring system**
- No external submission is required unless later requested during audit or review

B. Major Deviations (Funder Prior Approval Required – QRDI Submission Mandatory)

The following changes require formal prior approval from QRDI through RKEO before implementation:

- Any change in research scope, objectives, or scientific direction
- Budget reallocation beyond limits permitted under QRDI financial regulations or across major budget headings (e.g., personnel ↔ equipment ↔ travel)
- Extension or delay affecting approved project milestones or final delivery timelines

- Change of Principal Investigator (PI) or significant reduction in PI effort as defined in the grant agreement
- Addition, removal, or modification of sub-awards or external collaborators
- Institutional changes, including transfer of grant to another organisation
- Any change affecting ethics approval, regulatory compliance, or data governance arrangements

C. Reporting and Approval Process

- PI must inform RKEO **within 5 working days** of identifying a required major deviation
- RKEO will assess compliance against QRDI rules and determine submission requirements
- Formal change request will be prepared and submitted to QRDI via the official channel
- Implementation of the change must not proceed until written funder approval is received
- The project may be placed under **“**enhanced monitoring status**”** during review

D. Compliance and Risk Control

- All deviations must be documented in the Grant Change Log
- Repeated or significant deviations may trigger:
    - Increased reporting frequency
    - Financial audit review
    - Risk reclassification by RKEO
- Non-compliance with approval requirements may result in:
    - Suspension of project activities
    - Budget restrictions
    - Funder-imposed corrective actions

7. Grant Close-Out Phase

7.1 Timeline

Action	Deadline
Final progress report to funder	Per funder terms (typically 60-90 days after end date)
Final financial report	Per funder terms (typically 60-90 days after end date)
Final expenditure reconciliation	45 days after end date
RKEO close-out meeting	Within 60 days after end date
Grant file archiving	Within 90 days after end date

7.2 Close-Out Meeting Agenda – Template

```
RKEO Grant Close-Out Meeting

Grant ID: [XXXX]

PI: [Name]

Date: [Date]

1. Final Deliverables Confirmation (5 minutes)

   - All technical reports submitted and accepted?

   - All financial reports submitted and accepted?

2. Remaining Funds (5 minutes)

   - Any unexpended balance? (Return to funder or carry forward if
permitted?)

3. Property and Equipment (5 minutes)

   - Any equipment purchased requiring disposition?

4. Data and Materials (5 minutes)

   - Data management plan compliance

   - Any materials to be shared or retained?

5. Publications and Acknowledgment (5 minutes)

   - List of publications, presentations, patents

   - Confirm funder acknowledgment

6. Lessons Learned (10 minutes)

   - What went well?

   - What would improve future grants?

   - (Anonymous summary will inform framework updates)

7. Future Opportunities (5 minutes)

   - Follow-on funding plans

   - How can RKEO support?
```

7.3 Post-Award Archive

The following documents are archived in the permanent grant file (Section 10):

- Signed award agreement
- All progress and financial reports
- All compliance correspondence
- UREC approvals
- Final deliverables
- Publication list
- Close-out meeting summary

8. Collaboration and Communication Tools Guidelines

8.1 Approved Tools for Research Collaboration

The university supports the following tools for research collaboration. PIs may choose any tool from the "Approved" list in consultation with the IT and RKEO.

Tool	Purpose	Data Classification Allowed	RKEO Read-Only Possible?	External Collaborator Access?
Microsoft Teams	Chat, video, file sharing	Public, Internal, Restricted	Yes (via guest access)	Yes (with IT approval)
Microsoft Planner	Task management (Kanban)	Public, Internal	Yes (share plan)	Yes (with IT approval)
SharePoint Online	Document and list management	Public, Internal, Restricted	Yes (site permissions)	Yes (with IT approval)
OneDrive for Business	Personal file storage (shared selectively)	Public, Internal	No (not designed for shared workspaces)	Yes (share links)
Excel (SharePoint)	Shared spreadsheets	Public, Internal	Yes (via SharePoint)	Yes (with IT approval)

8.2 Conditional Tools (Require RKEO + IT Approval)

Tool	Condition for Approval
Trello (Free)	Only for low-risk grants; no restricted data; IT security review completed
Asana	Enterprise license must be purchased by department; RKEO read-only access required
Slack	Only for communication (not task tracking); data retention policy configured
GitHub	Only for code repositories; private repos only; no sensitive data
WhatsApp / Telegram	Not approved for any research collaboration; use Teams instead

8.3 Prohibited Tools

Tool	Reason for Prohibition

Personal Google Drive / Dropbox	No institutional data sovereignty; cannot guarantee retention or security
WhatsApp groups	No auditable record; cannot grant RKEO access
TikTok / WeChat	Institutional policy prohibits on university devices
Unofficial Excel files emailed	Version control impossible; security unclear

8.4 Selection Guidance by Team Size and Complexity

<table>
<tr><th>Team Size</th><th>Complexity</th><th>Recommended Tool</th></tr>
<tr><td>2-3 members</td><td>Low (one deliverable, few tasks)</td><td rowspan="5">Contact RKEO for consultation</td></tr>
<tr><td>2-3 members</td><td>Medium (multiple concurrent tasks)</td></tr>
<tr><td>4-6 members</td><td>Medium</td></tr>
<tr><td>4-6 members</td><td>High (sub-teams, dependencies)</td></tr>
<tr><td>7+ members</td><td>Any</td></tr>
</table>

8.5 Minimum Expectations for All Research Teams (Regardless of Tool)

Regardless of which tool a PI chooses, the team must maintain:

1. **Task tracker** with: task name, assigned person, due date, status (Not started/In progress/Complete)
2. **Milestone calendar** of key deliverables aligned with funder reporting schedule
3. **File repository** for all grant-related documents (proposal, award letter, reports, publications)
4. **Communication record** (within tool or separate) for decisions affecting scope, budget, or timeline

RKEO will not dictate the format of these four elements, only that they exist and are accessible to RKEO in read-only mode for medium/high-risk grants.

9. RKEO Visibility and Access Protocol

9.1 Principles of RKEO Access

Principle	Implementation
Minimal necessary access	RKEO requests only the specific tool or workspace, not entire university account
Read-only by default	RKEO never requires edit or write access
Time-bound	Access expires 90 days after grant end date
Opt-in with acknowledgment	PI explicitly grants access via form (not automatic)
Auditable	All RKEO access is logged by IT

9.2 Access Request Process

As stated in section 6.3, All access requests to research project systems (including Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive, and related Microsoft 365 resources) must follow a structured approval workflow to ensure **data governance, compliance, and auditability**.

9.3 What RKEO Will Monitor via Read-Only Access

Item	Frequency	Purpose
Task completion rate	Bi-Monthly	Verify progress against plan
Upcoming task deadlines	Weekly (automated)	Proactive compliance support
Milestone achievement	Per milestone	Trigger reporting reminders
File uploads to shared repository	Monthly	Ensure documentation is centralized

9.4 What RKEO Will NOT Do via Read-Only Access

- Comment on or edit tasks
- Reassign tasks or change due dates
- Access files unrelated to grant management
- Share access with anyone outside RKEO
- Use access for performance evaluation of PI or team members
- Monitor activity outside business hours (8am-6pm, Sunday-Thursday)

9.5 Opt-Out Provision

A PI may request exemption from read-only access if:

- The grant is low-risk (automatically exempted)
- The collaboration tool cannot support external read-only users (must provide evidence)
- The research involves sensitive data where additional viewers create compliance risk (requires legal review)
- The PI commits to alternative reporting (e.g., bi-weekly written updates) deemed equivalent by RKEO Director

Opt-out requests are submitted to RKEO Director in writing and decided within 10 business days.

10. Risk Management and Escalation

10.1 Risk Categories and Triggers

Risk Category	Trigger	Escalation Path
Financial Risk	Overspending; disallowed costs; drawdown delay	Finance → RKEO Director → PI → RKEO Director

Ethical Risk	UREC lapse; research misconduct allegation	UREC → RKEO Director → VPAA
Personnel Risk	PI departure; key personnel reduction >25%	PI → RKEO Director → Funder notification
Security Risk	Data breach; unauthorized access	IT → RKEO Director → Legal → Funder (if required)

10.2 Escalation Levels

Level	Action	Responsible
Level 1: Notification	PI informed of issue; 10 business days to respond	RKEO
Level 2: Corrective Action Plan	PI submits written plan within 15 business days; RKEO approves	RKEO
Level 3: Hold on Drawdowns	Finance pauses fund access until resolution	Finance + RKEO Director
Level 4: Institutional Intervention	Management notified; grant may be transferred or terminated	Management

10.3 Early Warning Indicators (EWIs)

RKEO will proactively monitor these EWIs and reach out to PI before escalation:

EWI	Threshold	Outreach Timing
Low burn rate	<25% of budget at 50% of timeline	15 days before next drawdown
High burn rate	>75% of budget at 50% of timeline	Immediate
No task updates in collaboration tool	60 days with no changes	5 business days after detection
Missed internal deadline (not funder)	3 missed internal milestones	After third occurrence
No response to RKEO email	2 consecutive emails unanswered	10 business days after second email

11. Non-Compliance and Remediation

11.1 Definition of Non-Compliance

Non-compliance means any failure to meet a requirement of:

- This framework (GAF)
- The funder's terms and conditions
- Applicable laws or regulations
- University research policies

11.2 Remediation Process

Violation Severity	Examples	Response
Minor (inadvertent, no harm)	Late internal check-in; incomplete task tracker	Written reminder; documented in grant file
Moderate (pattern of minor issues)	Three minor violations within 6 months; missed non-critical funder deadline	Corrective action plan; monthly check-ins for 6 months; copy to the Dean
Severe (intentional or harmful)	Unreported material change; expenditure of disallowed costs; data breach	Immediate RKEO Director review; funder notification; potential grant suspension; referral to Management

11.3 Appeals

PI may appeal any compliance determination to the Research Office within 15 business days of notification.

12. Reporting and Continuous Improvement

12.1 Internal Reporting

The RKEO maintains a tiered internal reporting structure to ensure transparency and accountability across the grant portfolio.

12.2 PI Feedback Mechanisms

- **Annual survey:** All PIs with active grants receive anonymous feedback survey
- **Check-in debrief:** Last 5 minutes of each monitoring meeting for PI to rate RKEO support
- **Suggestion box:** Anonymous form on RKEO website (*under implementation*)
- **Focus groups:** Biennial sessions with representative PIs

12.3 Framework Revision Cycle

This is a tentative and suggested cycle.

Month	Activity
January	Collect and analyse PI feedback from previous year
February	Draft proposed revisions
March	Circulate to Research Office for comment
April	Finalize revisions; update document
May	Communicate changes to all faculty
June	New version effective

13. Appendices

Appendix A: Grant Risk Assessment Form (Template)

Please refer to path 2.3: **`RKEO-FRM_RiskAssessment_Template.xlsx`**