RAMAIAH
College of Arts, Science & Commerce

GEF(E & GS)
M S RAMAIAH
College of Arts, Science and Commerce

M. S. RAMAIAH
College of Arts, Science and Commerce
(Re-accredited with "A" by NAAC, permanently affiliated to Bangalore University,
approved by AICTE, Recognized by UGC under 2f & 12B of UGC Act, 1956)
MSR Nagar, Bangalore 560054
www.msrcasc.edu.in

Research Development & Sustenance Policy

5 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTENANCE POLICY

5.1 Statement:

The Research, Development and Sustenance Policy ensure excellence and integrity in the conduct and implementation of research. The policy encourages quality research activities to realize the mission that aims at education through scientific knowledge and research, enabling conducive atmosphere. It aims at strengthening research culture, sustain and improvise the quality of research and also to create a platform for contract research and entrepreneurial activities.

5.2 Scope:

This policy and its components, applies to the students, research scholars, external students, faculty, student/faculty of sister concern institutions, collaborators, entrepreunial aspirants concerned administrators and all other stakeholders associated with the institution.

5.3 Objectives:

1   Update and upgrade the existing research facility time to time.

2   Promote quality in-house research projects

3   Identify and foster thrust areas of research

4   Encourage to obtain extramural grants

5   Encourage inter-institutional, inter-disciplinary and contract research

6   Ensure transparency and uphold ethical conduct of research

5.4 Regulations:

A designated Dean-Research & Development shall facilitate research and development activities of the College in coordination with Research advisory committee.

5.4.1 Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

To monitor and strengthen research activities and external collaborations, RCASC established a dedicated Research Committee (RC). The main role of the RC is to provide assistance and advice to the Principal and the Higher Management in holistic development of research at the college.

The Research Committee consists of one member from each department (or academic unit) within the College and a chair nominated by the Principal. In addition, external advisory committee consisting of experts from various research institutes in

Bangalore are also included to provide advice and assistance.

The Research Committee convenes regularly and discusses various aspects of Research, Consultancy, and Publications, working in conjunction with the organisational arrangement of the College. The responsibilities of the Research Committee includes;

❖ To establish Special focus groups (SGPs) by subject or academic unit based on the expertise and resources available within the College

❖ To work with the leaders of the departments, Deans and focus groups to develop a strategic plan for research

❖ To communicate and publicise the achievements and outcomes of College Research activities (Newsletters, Journals, and Conferences)

❖ To enhance the relationship and networking with other Research Committee in sister Ramaiah Institutes and other institutes.

❖ To develop strong external relationships with funding agencies, nationally and internationally through submission of applications for various funding schemes (VGST, DBT, DST, Bill and Melinda foundation, etc.,)

❖ To establish various policies and code of ethics to promote research, consultancy, and publishing

All the summary reports of the meetings done by the Research Committee are to be notified to all faculty, Principal, and Higher Management through proper channel.
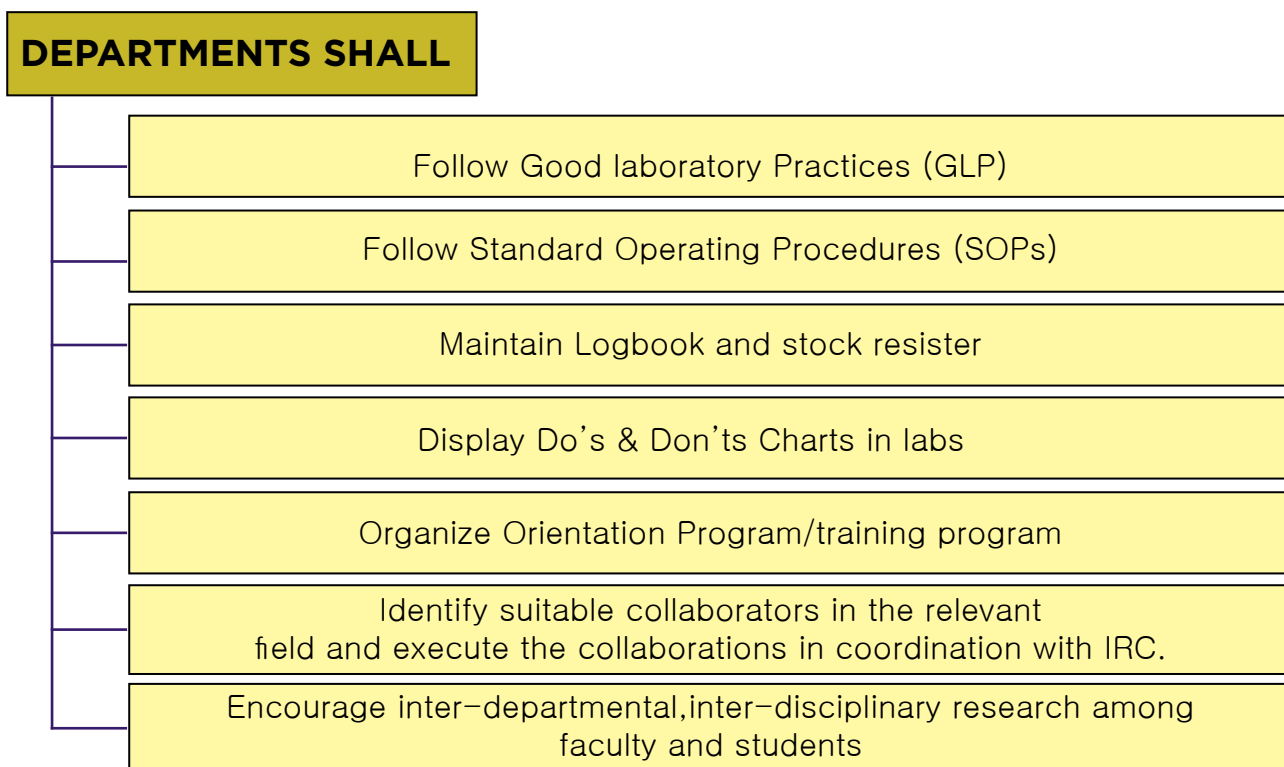
5.5 Research Guidelines:

5.5.1: Code of Ethics (Research)

❖ RCASC shall establish a research culture through openess and debate. Head of the research along with senior researchers shall encourage conducive research atmosphere through mutual cooperation and leadership. Young faculty in need of research experience shall be provided appropriate training.

❖ All research conducted shall be adherent to standard ethical standards and safety practices.

❖ All researchers shall keep timely and accurate documentation pertinent to protocols, necessary approvals obtained, and data storage.

❖ All faculties shall make efforts to publish their research findings in peer reviewed journals. All authors listed in the publication shall take personal responsibility to be familiar with the work done and be in a position to justify their contributions.

❖ All faculties shall ensure that only original work is submitted for publication with proper citation practices. Contributions from collaborators and funding agencies need to be properly acknowledged.

❖ All research findings shall be published as a coherent entity rather than small parts, except in a scenario where preliminary results pave way to novel findings. Quality is preferred over quantity.

❖ All faculties shall be aware of proper plagiarism practices. Any work that indulges in plagiarism constitutes unethical publishing and is condemned.

❖ If an error is identified in the published work, the corresponding author must ensure to publish a correction as soon as possible. In the case if the findings from the work are in serious doubt, a speedy retraction shall be published.

❖ Any complaints with respect to falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism of research shall follow with procedures dealing with 'Misconduct in Research'.

1.5.1.1 Departments shall:

DEPARTMENTS SHALL

Follow Good laboratory Practices (GLP)

Follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Maintain Logbook and stock resister

Display Do's & Don'ts Charts in labs

Organize Orientation Program/training program

Identify suitable collaborators in the relevant field and execute the collaborations in coordination with IRC.

Encourage inter-departmental,inter-disciplinary research among faculty and students

5.5.3 Faculty are expected to:

❖ Attempt for securing research projects, whereas, faculty with Ph.D. shall submit at least one research proposal per academic year for external funding.

❖ Publish one research paper per academic year.

❖ Participate/present papers in one conference/seminar per academic year.

❖ Submit research proposals to funding agencies through proper channel and implement the project as mentioned below.

❖ Mention affiliation of the college in research publications.

❖ Encourage students to carry out short term In-House research project.

Project Notification

Proposal preparation

Forwarded through RC and approved from Principal

A copy of proposal, notification, forward letter to be submitted to Principal Office

Faculty securing grant must sign an undertaking stating to complete the project

Presentations to be made before RC on bi-annual/annual basis

Completion report, Utilization Certificate and Statement of Expenditure copy to be submitted to Principal office.

Due credit shall be given to the College in the suitable places in Conferences/proceedings/publications.

5.5.4 Scholars shall:

SCHOLARS SHALL

Obtain prior permission from the concerned HOD's for Inter-departmental research or to utilize any infrastructure facility from other department

Procure any specialized chemicals or instruments to be required for research

Remit General Maintenance Fee (GMF) to the college annually as per the recommendations of the RC

Present the progress of the research work before the RC every six months
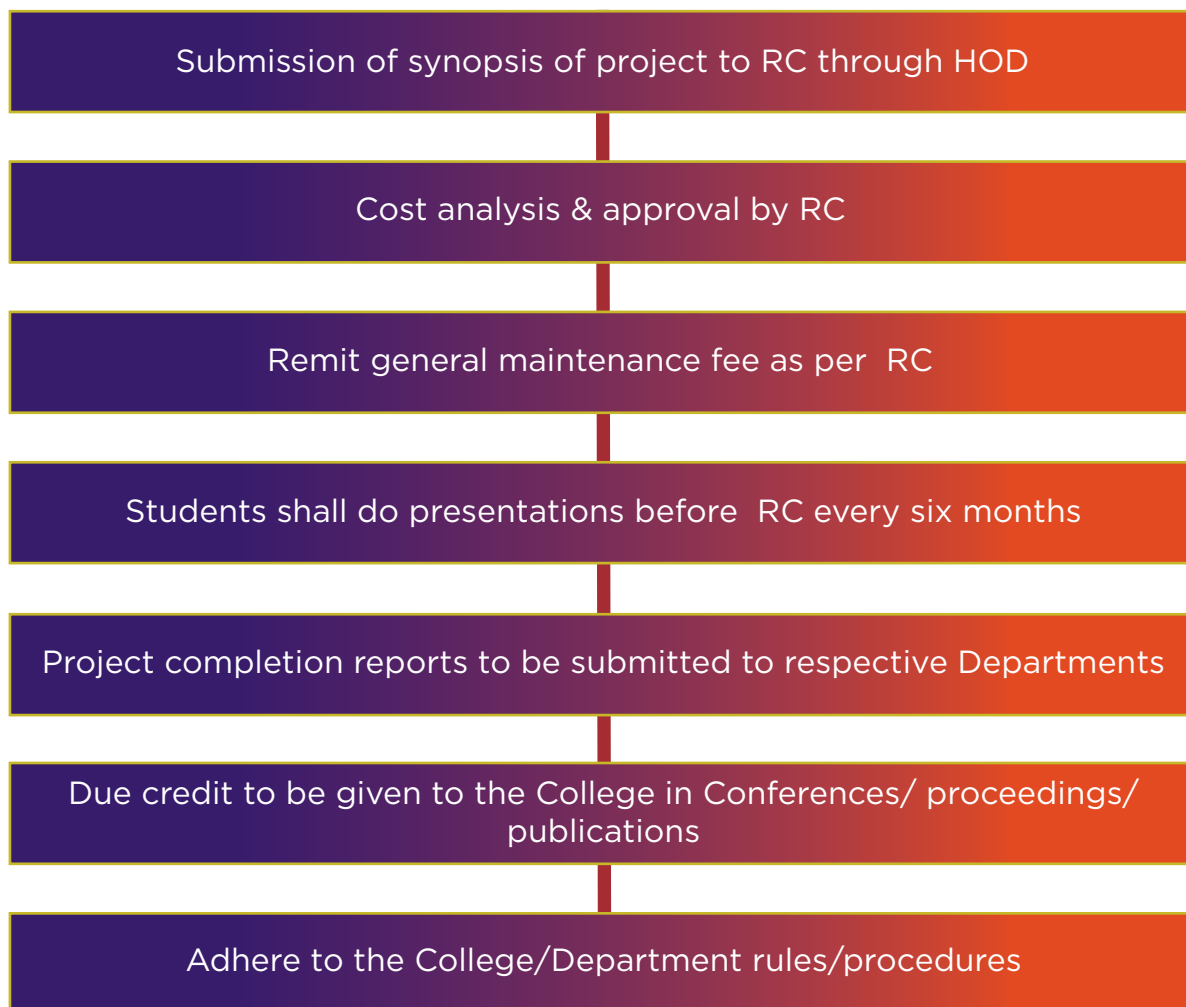
Mention affiliation of the college in research publications

Provide due acknowledgement to the college in researchpublications in case of infrastructural usage.

5.5.5 Students shall

❖ Obtain prior permission from the concerned HoD's to undertake In-house research project, Inter-departmental research or to utilize any infrastructure facility from other department.

❖ Procure specialized chemicals or instruments required for the project.

❖ Remit General Maintenance Fee (GMF) to the college annually as per the recommendations of the RC.

❖ Adhere to the College/Department rules/procedures.

Note: GMF may vary depending on the project objectives.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│       Submission of synopsis of project to RC through HOD       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Cost analysis & approval by RC                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Remit general maintenance fee as per  RC             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│       Students shall do presentations before  RC every six months │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│    Project completion reports to be submitted to respective Departments │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Due credit to be given to the College in Conferences/ proceedings/ │
│                            publications                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Adhere to the College/Department rules/procedures       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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5.5.6 Incubates/Contract Researchers/Other Stake holders shall:

❖ Submit proposal comprising work-plan and timeline before RC to undertake contract research or to validate their Proof of Concept (POC)

❖ Remit Infrastructure Usage Fee (IUF) to the college that is fixed on case to case basis, based on the equipment/facility utilized as per the recommendations of RC.

❖ Procure consumables for their project/research work.

❖ Adhere to the rules and regulation of the College that may change time to time.

5.6 Research promoting schemes:

5.6.1 RESEARCH PROMOTION POLICY

Brief Statement:

All research activities at RCASC are monitored and assisted by a Research Committee which is headed by the Dean of Sciences/Head of Department. Expert

associates from all departments are enrolled as members within the committee. The committee convenes and takes decisions on strategy, preparations, corrections, and updating policies as per UGC norms and report research progress to the Dean. All final decisions by the committee are submitted to the Principal/CE for review and approval. The research policies at RCASC are divided into following categories: Academic Research

- ❖ Academic Research
- ❖ Sponsored Research
- ❖ Extension & Extramural
- ❖ Consultancy
- ❖ IPR & IEE

❖ **Academic Research Policy:**

a) All faculty who are eligible to pursue PhD are advised to register within one year of appointment.

b) Individual faculty of every department shall conduct research in their area of expertise. In addition, they should also develop research areas recommended by central government research bodies.

c) All faculty are advised to identify inter-disciplinary areas of research that brings collaborative efforts among the departments.

d) All faculty are strongly advised to attend workshops/conferences with on duty leave. Registration fee shall be reimbursed.

e) Accepted publications by faculty in Scopus indexed and Web of Science journals are appreciated with proper incentives.

f) All categories of publications from faculty shall go through plagiarism check.

g) All project works and dissertations done by students must be research focused with a long term goal of publishing in indexed journals.

❖ **Sponsored Research Policy:**

a)   Faculty with doctoral and post-doctoral experience shall aim to submit one research proposal for government funding.

b) Every faculty shall apply for internal funding that creates base projects which will fetch external funding. The funding necessary for internal projects shall be procured through submitting proposal for 'Seed Money' to the management.

c) The budgetary allotment in Seed Money proposals will accommodate requests for basic infrastructure that assists in both internal and external funded projects.

d) All departments shall strive hard to get recognition from national/international funding schemes such as DST-FIST, CAS etc.,

e) Special focus groups (SFPs) shall be established to uplift departmental research strengths and to align them with government schemes.

f) Training programs, workshops, and seminars shall be conducted to educate faculty in the

submission of research proposals and to publish their work in peer reviewed journals.

g) Projects that involve innovation and patent recognition shall be rewarded with appropriate incentives.

h) All meritorious research done by faculty shall be recognized through 'Best Research Award' and with monetary incentives.

i) All aspects of research and innovation shall be protected by IPR and copyright policies.

❖ **Extension & Extramural Policy:**

a) All faculty are encouraged to invite industry experts to take joint resource projects.

b) All faculty shall establish connections with premier research institutes for faculty exchange programs and research collaborations.

c) All faculty shall select focus areas that bring forth solutions to societal problems such as, women and child welfare, chronic diseases and addiction, and other healthcare areas.

d) All departments shall conduct workshops and conferences pertinent to social problems and their research expertise.

e) All departments shall aim to conduct community outreach programs outside the organization. Students and faculty shall be advised to take the role of resource persons during these programs.

❖ **Consultancy:**

The policy guidelines suggested in this section will provide a framework to conduct consultancy activities at RCASC. The guidelines will apply to all faculty at RCASC.

a) Any organization requesting consulting services from RCASC shall contact Principal/Head of Research with details about the required expertise.

b) The Principal/Head of Research will forward the request to the concerned department.

c) Upon discussion with the heads of the departments, Principal/Head of Research shall nominate a faculty or group of faculty having expertise in the requested services.

d) The Principal/Head of Research shall approve the request for consultancy by assessing factors such as, compatibility and commitment of faculty member(s), mobilization of institutional resources, and based on potential conflict of interests.

e) After final approval, a MoU shall be signed in the presence of Principal between the organization and the department for the type or consultancy work and other commercials involved.

f) Faculty must update the progress of the consultancy work to the Principal through Head of Research.

g) All Publications generated through the consultancy shall oblige with proper faculty affiliation of the institute, acknowledge any institutional facilities utilized, and shall be in compliance with IPR and copyright policies of the institute.

h) To strongly encourage revenue generation through consultancy services, RCASC shall take 40% of the revenue and the organization shall take 60%, excluding GST and other taxes. All faculty involved in the consultancy services shall be paid proper incentives.

❖ **IPRs, Copy Rights, Innovations, Incubations, Entrepreneur Development, and Patents:**

a) RCASC shall create research innovation culture through brainstorming, organizing ideation and faculty development programs.

b) Potential innovative projects shall be moved to incubation centers which can be transformed into large scale start-ups. Students shall gain entrepreneurship skills through incubation centers and start-ups.

c) Every innovation shall lead to patents and RCASC shall provide necessary support and expertise for proper filing and registering patents.

d) RCASC shall also provide support to faculty to protect their research ideas and projects through Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and copyright policies.

❖ Incentives for Good publications

The Institution is providing incentives for good Research Publications in UGC recognised journals and in reputed International Journals.

❖ Seed money for Research

The Management will provide seed money for the research purpose as against the project proposals.

All the teachers attending National and International Conferences/ Seminars/

Workshops to present a paper, the registration fee for the same will be

reimbursed.

❖ **Seed Money Grants:**

Working with the policies of research promotion established by the College Research Committee, RCASC management has initiated acceptance of application for Seed Money under the Research and Development Division.

The following guidelines have been formulated to write, review, rate, and accept innovative and high socio-impact research proposals;

a) A unified and approved format of application for Seed Money release

b) All faculty and/or Special Focus Groups are informed about the format of the application and are requested to submit filled in applications

c) Once received, all applications will under Quality Check by the Head of Research or HoD (if needed) and are submitted to Principal for final approval

d) Once approved by the Head of the Institute, applications are sorted by subject/theme category and are submitted to expert panel for review process.

e) All the expert panel are provided with special evaluation criteria that emphasize; Background statement, Hypothesis, Experimental approach, Socio-Economic impact, and Budget.

f) Final expert committee recommendations will be sent to the Head of the Institute or Chief Executive for review and approval.

5.6.2 INCENTIVES FOR GOOD PUBLICATIONS

In view of the review of the Institution's Research output as well as the criteria put forth by NIRF for recognition of publications raising process. It has been decided to use the following categories for providing incentives: A (Excellent Journal), B (Good Journal), C (Fair Journal), D (Acceptable- which meets minimum standards. Please refer to Scimago for Q1 - Q4 categorization.

The incentives have been as follows:
Please refer (to

Category	Description	Impact Factor	Incentives
A	Excellent		
B	Good		
C	Fair		
D	Acceptable		
All UGC recognized journals			

For the purpose of incentives, the faculty member must be from Ramaiah College of Arts, Science and Commerce includes full time regular teaching/ Research staff. However visiting faculty, post doctoral fellow project associates, research assistants and students are excluded and are not eligible for incentives.

❖ RCASC faculty members will be eligible for full incentive amount if he/ she is the first author.

❖ Publications has all RCASC authors, incentive amount will be divided equally among all the faculty members that are on authors list.

❖ The faculty members will be eligible for full incentive amount, if the first two or three authors are students.

❖ The RCASC faculty will be eligible to get 50% of the incentive amount if he/ she is the second author or the third author while the first author or second author is external (not from the college).

❖ If the first two authors are students or one of them is a student and the other is an external author, then RCASC faculty members will be eligible only for 50% of the incentive amount.

❖ In case of multiple authorships of students and faculty all internal RCASC faculty will   share the incentive amount.

While claiming the incentive, please enclose the communication received from the Journal editors clearly informing the authors that the papers have been accepted from publication without any conditions. Please enclose a copy of that manuscript.

We are looking forward to exciting publication activity of RCASC.

Event

National Level Presentation
(Registration, poster printing, logistic charges)

National level Publications
(With impact factor or Indexed in
Scopus, Thomson Reuters ISI, Google Scholar)*

International level Publications (with impact factor or
indexed in Scopus, Thomson Reters IDI, Google Scholar)*

Registration Fee for attending seminars/conferences/
symposia/ FDPs)

5.6.3. Award for Excellence in RESEARCH: About the Award

❖ Purpose: To encourage and recognize the best Researcher at RCASC annually, with a view to enhance the quality, standard, relevance of research at the Institute.

❖ Eligibility: Open to all categories of current faculty members in service at the Institute for a minimum period of 5 years, once only in a five-year period.

❖ Nomination: In the format given below with each Aspirant to get the same endorsed by a Professor from the same group as per the grouping of branches listed below and forwarded to the Principal through HoD in both hard and soft copy form. Self-nomination not acceptable.

❖ Selection: By the RCASC Awards' Committee comprising nominees of the Management and the External members with the Principal as Convener, after the approval of its   recommendations by the Evaluation Committee

❖ Award: To include Certificate with Citation and Cash Prize will be given away at a suitable function in the year. One award will be given to faculty members in each of the three branch -wise groups as follows:

• Sciences (Biotechnology, Genetics, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Microbiology,
Computer Science, Electronics, Mathematics)

• Commerce/ Management Branches (Commerce, BBA and MBA)

• Humanities/ Languages (English, Languages, IC, Political Science, Psychology, Journalism)

5.6.3 LAST DATE FOR THE RECEIPT OF NOMINATIONS: NOMINATION FORM

❖ Particulars of the Aspirant:

(g) Name:

(h) Designation:

(i) Department and Date of joining the Institute:

(j) Gender:

(k) E-mail ID:

(l) Telephone Nos.   Landline: Mobile:

❖ **Education and Experience of the Aspirant** *(Beginning with the most recent one):*

❖ **(d) Qualifications:**

Degree *(Subject)*	Year of Award	University/Institution

(e) Experience:

Period	Designation	Institution/Organization

(f) Service at MSRCASC:

Period *(mm/yy)*	Designation	Department

(h) Membership of Technical/Professional Societies:

Period *(mm/yy)*	Grade	Society/Institution

❖ **Proposed Citation:** *(Not more than a paragraph (<30 words) highlighting the Aspirant's most significant contribution(s) related to the Award.)*

❖ **Explain how the contribution(s) of the Aspirant will have significant impact on**

the quality of Research and accreditation/ ranking status at MSRCASC in the near future:*(To be limited to 100 words)*

❖ **Academic/Scientific achievements of the Aspirant at MSRCASC in the most recent five years, such as:**

   (a) **Participation in Research related activities at MSRCASC and/ or elsewhere including academic collaborations and conferences in these areas.***(To be limited to 500 words.)*

   (b) **Funds generated by way of RESEARCH programmes/ activities.**

❖ **Describe any additional achievements of the Aspirant***(with brief descriptions)* **bringing out their importance for the Award:**

❖ **List of UG/PG projects supervised and publications in the most recent five years:** *(To be attached separately, giving the Name(s) of author(s), Title, Journal. Volume, Page Numbers and Year for Papers along with the citation index or any other equivalent metric and relevant details for Project Reports/Books/Other Reports. Copies of publications need not be forwarded at this stage.)*

    Results of Students' Feedback on Coursework conducted by the Aspirant in the last three years: *(To be provided from the data held in the Departmental Office)*

❖ **List of Awards/Recognitions received by the Aspirant, if any:**

Name of the Award/ Recognition	Nature and Year of Award/ Recognition	Institution/Organization

❖ **References:** *(Names and Addresses of two Referees who may be contacted for further information. One referee from MSRCASC (apart from nominator), another from any other institute, familiar with the work of the Aspirant)*

❖ **Aspirant's Certification:**

    I certify that the data/information provided by me in this Form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I agree to provide original papers/documents referred to in this Form as may be required by the MSRCASC Awards' Committee for verification.

Date: (Signature)

                                                   Name of the Aspirant

❖
❖

❖ **Nominator's Endorsement:**

I have great pleasure in nominating _____for the Award for Excellence in **_RESEARCH:_** 2018-19 under the Group _____I have verified the details provided in the Nomination Form and I am convinced that data/information included herein is true, correct and verifiable. I recommend that this Nomination may be given due consideration for the Award for Excellence in **_RESEARCH:_** 2018-19 under the Group_____.

Name of the Nominator:

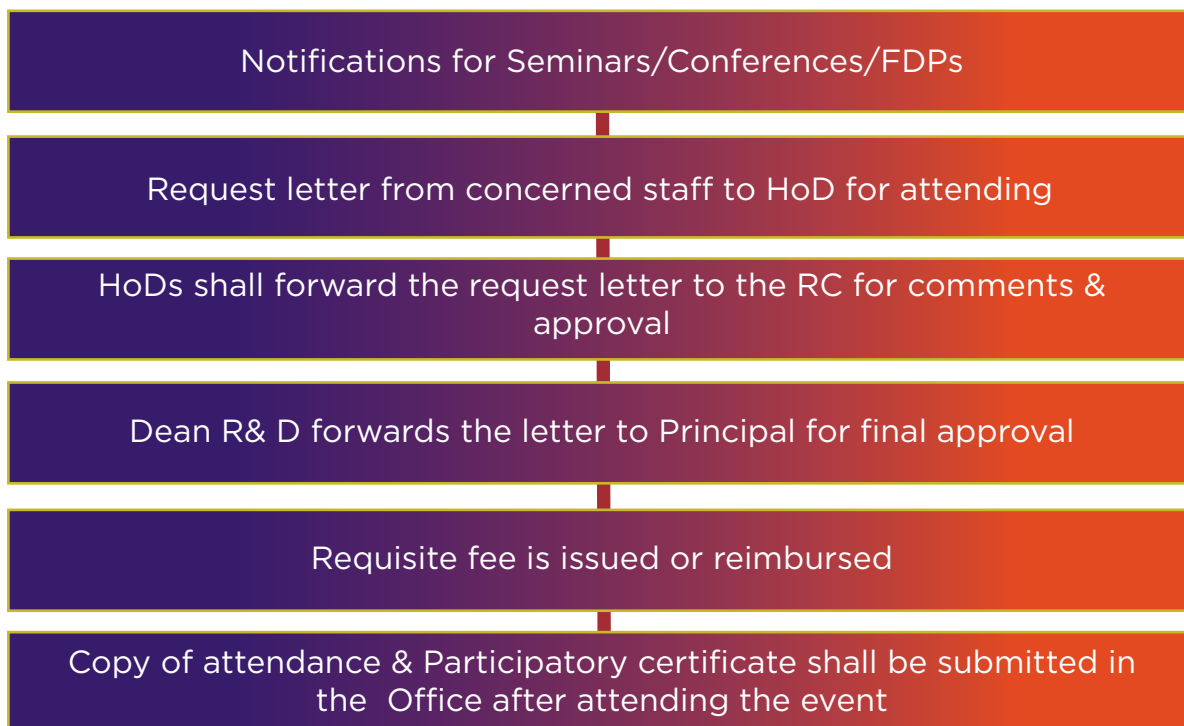Designation:

Department:

E-mail ID:

Telephone Nos.

Date:

Place: Signature of Nominator

Forwarded by HoD

Signature with Seal

5.7 Procedure to Avail Financial Assistance:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Notifications for Seminars/Conferences/FDPs            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Request letter from concerned staff to HoD for attending │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│    HoDs shall forward the request letter to the RC for        │
│    comments & approval                                        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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│   Dean R& D forwards the letter to Principal for final approval│
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Requisite fee is issued or reimbursed             │
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│  Copy of attendance & Participatory certificate shall be      │
│  submitted in the  Office after attending the event           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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5.8 Research Grant Management

5.8.1 Internal research funds:

❖ Department shall identify 2 to 3 thrust areas of research, display in the labs and also make suitable teams among the faculty members to carry out research in the identified thrust areas

❖ Heads of the Departments may select the faculty on rotation basis to utilize the internal research fund to establish experimental evidence for research proposal to be submitted for obtaining grants from funding agencies so as to provide equal opportunity to all staff or on the basis of relevance to the research activities.

❖ Dean shall review the progress of Department's research periodically.

Research and Development Fund

Format for submitting the Research Proposal

Name of the Principal Investigator	
Qualification	
Affiliation	
Department	
Address , Phone Number and e-mail	
Papers Published in the research area(Attach brief profile)	

Name of the Co-investigator	
Qualification	
Department	
Affiliation	
Address , Phone Number and e-mail	
Papers Published in the research area(Attach brief profile)	

1. Title of the Propal……...…………………………………....

2. Broad Area of Research……………………...……………......

3. Sub Area of Research………………...

4. Brief Introduction……………………...…….(Max 500 words)

5. Background and statement of the problem (this in the light of a thorough National   and International literature review)………...............…….. (Max 500 words)

6. Research question or hypothesis, aim and objectives……(Max 300 words)………...............………

7. Research design (type of study)………........................….(Max 300 words)……………….......…

8. Study population and sampling(If applicable)……………………..……….........................…………

9. Data collection methods and instruments…………….......(Max 300 words)....................……………

10. Data analysis methods - if applicable statistical planning must be fully addressed, or the candidate should provide evidence that statistics are not required

11. Mechanisms to assure the quality of the study – e.g. control of bias, safe storage of data................. (Max 300 words)

12. Research Schedule -Bar chart for completion of the project…....................……………..........…..

13. Participants in the study – all people involved in the study, and the role they play, should be identified.*……………………..

14. Ethical considerations……………………..………………….(Max 300 words)

15. Environmental Issues……………………..……………………..(Max 300 words)

16. Scope of Patenting ....

17. Scope of attracting external funding ....

18. Resources required for the study, including budget (Personnel, Consumables, Equipment, Travel, Subcontracting, Provisions, Licensing fees, other)……...…...........….…

Sl. No	Item	BUDGET			Amount (In Rupees)
		1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	Total
1.	Equipment				
2.	Consumables				
3.	Research Assistant				
4.	Travel				
5.	Other costs				
	Grand total				

18.1 Justification for the manpower requirement

18.2 Justification for consumable

18.3 Justification for Equipment

18.4 Justification for other costs

19 . Scientific Impact, dissemination and potential exploitation (Max 300 words)

20.   References…..…(Max 50)…………………………

21. Appendices (copy of questionnaire, consent forms, etc.)

***Note 1:** All proposals are subject to initial screening. If a proposal passes initial screening it is formally accepted as an application and will enter a second screening stage comprising of a high powered committee.

***Note 2:** Submit the completed form (both hard and soft copy) to the Principal, RCASC

Endorsement from the Head of Department*

(To be given on letter head)

Project Title: ....

1. Certified that the Department welcomes participation of Mr/Ms…………………………… as the Principal Investigator and Mr/Ms………………………………as the Principal   Co-Investigator for the Project and that in the unforeseen event of discontinuance by the Principal Investigator, the Principal Co-Investigator will assume the responsibility of the fruitful completion of the Project.

Date:

Place:

Certificate from the Investigator

Project Title:………

1. I/ We agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the research grant.

2. I/ We did not submit the Project proposal elsewhere for financial support.

3. I/ We have explored and ensured that equipment and basic facilities will actually be available as and when required for the purpose of the Projects.

4. I/ We undertake that on permanent equipment will be made available to other users during spare time.

Date:

Place:

The above project is Approved / Not Approved

Comments:

Signatures of the committee Members

1.

2.

3.

5.9 Annual conference:

❖ The college shall organize a national level conference, a scientific platform to showcase research abilities of its faculty and students as well as other delegates.

❖ Faculty is expected to apply and secure external grants for hosting/conducting lecture series/ conference/symposia.