

ORIC Newsletter

University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

October 16 to 31, 2025



ORIC CHARTS BOLD COURSE FOR RESEARCH-LED INNOVATION AND INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE



The Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC) has been reaffirmed as the strategic nucleus of research and development at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), tasked with driving innovation, commercialization, and academic entrepreneurship.

Chairing a high-level meeting at the ORIC Conference Room, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali emphasized the pivotal role of ORIC in shaping the university's future through a robust ecosystem of technology, business ventures, and economic empowerment. Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali directed ORIC to ensure its institutional framework is implemented in letter and spirit, bringing all research-related affairs under its structured domain. He stressed the need for a comprehensive annual calendar encompassing key activities such as ORIC Steering Committee sessions, ORIC Forums, Institutional Biosafety Committee meetings, Institutional Review and Advisory Board engagements, Special Advisory Board consultations, and capacity-building workshops for both ORIC staff and researchers. Highlighting the importance of researcher development, the Vice Chancellor instructed ORIC to organize specialized training workshops on writing competitive research proposals, patent applications, project execution, and financial management. He

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pledged to facilitate a dedicated capacity-building workshop for ORIC staff in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Islamabad. To further incentivize faculty engagement, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali called for the introduction of new facilities and benefits for researchers, particularly those securing substantial project funding or translating research into

VC urges Facilitation Over Frustration: Rethinking Governance for Campus Community

technologies, products, and services that evolve into business ventures. He also suggested exploring the potential of linking successful research outcomes with Annual Development Program (ADP) projects. In a bid to strengthen institutional coordination, the Vice Chancellor announced that Engineer Muhammad Ali Nasir, HEC's focal person for NRPU projects, has been invited to UAF next week to address challenges faced by researchers during project execution. He urged ORIC to enhance its liaison with funding agencies through regular visits and strategic engagement. Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali expressed concern over faculty departures without ORIC's involvement, directing that no faculty member should exit the university without formal clearance from ORIC. He instructed the office to ensure continuity of research projects by appointing alternate Principal Investigators (PIs) and notifying funding agencies accordingly. Addressing project extension protocols, he emphasized that researchers must not halt work while awaiting approval and that ORIC should proactively intervene to maintain momentum. He also recommended subscribing to platforms like "World of Science" and SCOPUS to establish institutional accounts and elevate research visibility.

He emphasized transformation of mindset by using the institutional rules, regulations and powers to facilitate the community instead of creating hurdles in giving due rights to the persons on receiving end. On the subject of global rankings, particularly the Green Metric Ranking, the Vice Chancellor noted UAF's potential for a strong position due to its sustainability initiatives. He directed the Manager of Rankings and Incentives to coordinate with Dr. Muhammad Haroon, Assistant Professor of



ORIC to Strengthen Liaison with Funding Agencies Through Regular Engagements

Forestry, and appoint focal persons for each ranking component.

Concluding the meeting, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali requested faculty-wise and stage-wise data of research projects from the past five years, anticipating that such evidence-backed insights from ORIC would strengthen future academic discussions and strategic planning.

Principal Officer ATRI Prof Dr. Rao Zahid Abbas, Manager Research Management Dr. Khuram Zia, Deputy Directors Dr. Humaira Razzaq, Eng. Furqan Asghar, Associate Prof. Dr. Saira Akhtar, Manager Rankings & Incentives Aisha Arshad, Administrative Officer. Muhammad Hanif, Research Assistants Ms Raima Babar, Abdur Rehman, JCO Azam Hussain, Shahzad Saeed, Abida Parveen and Sajida Parveen also attended the meeting. The Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC) has reaffirmed as the strategic nucleus of research and development, tasked with driving innovation, commercialization, and academic entrepreneurship.



NICF LAUNCHES COHORT 7 WITH A VISION FOR IMPACT-DRIVEN INNOVATION

The National Incubation Center Faisalabad (NIC Faisalabad) arranged its Cohort 7 Orientation Ceremony that brought together a diverse mix of startups with 19 startups in the Incubation Program, five startups in the Hatchery Program, and four women-led ventures under the SheVentures Program.

The startups represent a variety of sectors including AgriTech, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, FinTech, HealthTech, FoodTech, IoT, and EdTech, reflecting NIC Faisalabad's commitment to nurturing technology-driven entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Chief Guest of the ceremony, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali stressed upon the need to develop the innovative business ideas among the youth to embark the journey of entrepreneurship. He said that with developing these skills, they will become job provider rather than remain job seekers. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali appreciated NIC Faisalabad and BIC UAF role in bridging academia, industry, and innovation, and encouraged young entrepreneurs to create impact-driven solutions addressing real-world challenges. The event offered valuable insights into the evolving intersection of agriculture and technology while providing an opportunity for founders to connect with mentors, investors, and industry experts. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad urged the students to refurbish innovative ideas skills.

The event was attended by several distinguished industry leaders and ecosystem enablers including Sayyed Ahmad Masud, Project Director of NIC Islamabad and Managing Partner at NIC Faisalabad, Murtaza Zaidi, Interim Project Director of NIC Faisalabad, Adnan Aslam, Director Business Incubation Center Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad, Founder of DigiKhata, Ali Najam, Vice President of Amaana Capital, Asma Shah, Founder of Go Flour, Sobia Aqeel, Representative of FWCCI, Dr. Iftikhar, Head of BIC UAF, and Fouad Bajwa, Founder of



Digital Dera. The ceremony featured engaging panel discussion titled “AgriTech, AI, and the Next Wave of Innovation” with Adnan Aslam from DigiKhata, Ali Najam from Amaana Capital, and Asma Shah from Go Flour.

The Orientation Ceremony concluded on an inspiring note, setting the stage for a transformative journey ahead for the Cohort 7 startups. The new batch of founders is now ready to explore, innovate, and contribute to Pakistan's growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Recognized as Pakistan's first and leading AgriTech-focused incubation hub, NIC Faisalabad continues to drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology adoption across the agricultural and industrial sectors. Funded by the Ignite National Technology Fund and the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, NIC Faisalabad is managed by a consortium of esteemed organizations including Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited, Change Mechanics Private Limited, Cyber Vision International, GroundUp, and the Founder Institute.



ORIC HOSTS INSIGHTFUL VIRTUAL SESSION ON PSF RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

The Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC) organized an interactive session in its Conference Room with guest speaker Dr. Muhammad Israr (PSO-Incharge NSLP). The ORIC Focal Persons from various departments were invited to participate and interact with the guest speaker to spread the useful information regarding submission of Research Proposals to Pakistan Science Foundation.

The guest speaker Dr. Muhammad Israr while briefing the participants told that concept papers are invited periodically on the issues of national importance within the priority areas. All researchers interested in submitting a proposal for the funding must first submit a concept paper to the NSLP. Those concept papers that pass an initial screening will be invited to submit a Full-length proposal to the NSLP. He said that the concept papers must be submitted through online portal via PSF Research Grant



Management System (RGMS). He also responded to the questions of the participants regarding NSLP and Pak China Joint Research Program 2025.

Manager Research Management Dr. Khuram Zia, Deputy Director ORIC Dr. Humera Razzaq, Manager Ranking and Incentives, Associate Professor ORIC Dr. Saira Akhtar were among the organizers of the session.



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

GENDER CLIMATE AWARD 2026



OPEN TO ALL WOMEN
PLAYING A ROLE IN
CLIMATE LEADERSHIP

CASH AWARD:
RS. 1 MILLION

DEADLINE:
NOV 30, 2025

APPLY NOW AND BE RECOGNIZED
FOR YOUR IMPACT!



VC STRESSES STRATEGIC CONCEPT NOTES FOR SECURING NRPU RESEARCH GRANTS

A well-crafted concept note featuring a compelling title, clearly defined objectives, robust methodology, and anticipated outcomes aligned with national and global priorities is essential for securing competitive research grants. This was emphasized by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali while chairing exclusive sessions with applicants of the National Research Program for Universities (NRPU) at New Senate Hall and Syndicate Hall on the next day.

Organized by the Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC), the session aimed to critically review and enhance concept notes prior to their submission on the Higher Education Commission (HEC) portal. Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali urged researchers to align their proposals with both local relevance and international significance, while also reflecting their professional expertise and capacity to execute the proposed methodology and achieve meaningful results.

Spanning over seven hours, the interactive session provided a platform for researchers to present their concept notes for rigorous evaluation, constructive feedback, and strategic refinement. The review board offered detailed suggestions to elevate each proposal to a level that meets the expectations of funding agencies.

Prof. Dr. Rao Zahid Abbas- PO ATRI, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naveed ISES, Prof. Dr. Saif ur Rehman Inst. of Animal & Dairy Science, Prof. Dr. Nadem Akbar Agronomy, Prof. Dr. Sohail Sajid Parasitology, Prof. Dr. Asif Hanif Chemistry, Prof. Dr. Jam Nazir Ahmad Entomology, Dr. Ayesha Khatoon Pathology, Dr. Rizwana Maqbool PBG, Dr. Waseem Amjad Energy System Engineering, Dr. Khuram Zai Manager Research Management ORIC, Dr. Humaira Razzaq Deputy and Dr. Furqan Asghar Deputy Director ORIC were among the evaluators whereas from ORIC Dr. Saira Akhtar, Aisha Arshad, Muhammad Hanif, Raima Babar, Abdur Rehman Sukhera, Sajid Parveen, Abida Parveen, Mr. Muhammad Azam, Shahzad Seed and others attended the session.

There were about 120 research proposals presented and evaluated during two-day exercise. The researchers were advised to bridge the gaps and make the proposals attract worthy for funding. The Vice Chancellor desired the IRAB to



jell their heads together and further fine-tune the proposals and send a final copy for his review. Complying with Vice Chancellor directions, ORIC hosted IRAB meeting on Saturday October 18, 2025 wherein revised proposals were reviewed in detail and made recommendations for onward transmission to the Vice Chancellor.



ENGRO DELEGATION HOLDS MEETING WITH VICE CHANCELLOR

A delegation from Engro Fertilizers visited UAF and held a meeting Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali. During the meeting matters relating to R&D activities, mutual cooperation, providing internship opportunities to the students and joint research projects were came under discussion. Syed Shauzab Gardezi, Head of Agronomy told the Vice Chancellor that Engro Learning Center held 24 seminars, training and others events during the year wherein nearly 1300 people including students, farmers and other stakeholders got benefit. He said told that his organization facilitated the varsity for holding conference, seminar and other R&D activities. Deputy Manager Quality Insurance Ijaz Ahmad, Deputy Manager Research and Development Dr. Syed Shahid Hussain Shah, Microbiologist Dr manzoor, Research and Development Officer Faisalabad Mr Imran Ahmad, and Agronomist Engro Learning Centre Saba Malik were among the participants of the meeting.



DR. SAIRA AKHTAR FEATURED IN SCHOLARLY VOLUME ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Associate Professor ORIC Dr. Saira Akhtar, contributed as an author of a book on "Qualitative Research". Dr. Saira endowed with diverse experience in dealing the rural community in general and the women in particular for their inclusive participation, women empowerment, and gender, is an active member of ACIAR funded project team on citrus value chain jointly run by University of Agriculture, Faisalabad and the University of Sargodha. She is author of four books and contributed numerous chapters in international and nationally published books. As a rural sociologist, her scholarly contributions widely acknowledged inland and abroad. She remained among pioneer of worked and contributed in Int. Center for Development and Decent Work. There are 5 PhD scholars completed their degrees under her supervision while she guided various students in their professional pursuits as member of the supervisory committee.



Empower Your Startup Journey with SSBC Cohort 4

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Don't miss your chance to be part of Pakistan's most vibrant startup community!
Apply today and unlock new opportunities for growth and success

Deadline: 07 November, 2025

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Events



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Expert
Mentorship



Workspace
Support



Seed Funding
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Apply now

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Or Apply through the link

<https://forms.gle/oCgf4dMU83c9fgDh9>

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DR. HAMMAD BADAR TAKES REINS AS DIRECTOR BIC

After appointment as Director BIC Dr. Hammad Badar, Associate Professor, IBMS assumed charge as Director, Business Incubation Center. A reception was held at BIC to welcome the new Director Dr. Hammad Badar and to bid farewell to the outgoing Director Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad. The event was attended by Prof. Dr. Rao Zahid Abbas PO ATRI, Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Director IBMS, Dr. Khuram Zia, Manager Research Management ORIC, Dr. Rubina Rashid, Dr. Shahbaz Nasir Khan Deputy Directors, and Research Officer Dr. Riffat Shamim.



CALL FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

CHINA-PAKISTAN JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAM 2025

(THE CALL IS OPEN BETWEEN 28.10.2025 TO 16.12.2025)

PSF/MoST and MoST China are jointly launching the Joint Research call with the aim of supporting joint R&D in the areas of Science and Technology. Thus, this call majorly focuses on emerging areas of technologies and invite HEC Chartered Universities, Public Sector R&D organizations of Pakistan to submit a joint proposal addressing following priority areas;

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Earth Sciences | ■ Air Pollution | ■ New energy | ■ Health and Medicine |
| ■ Climate Change | ■ New Materials | ■ Food and Agriculture | ■ ICT and AI |

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- Chinese and Pakistani scientists should come to an agreement with each other and jointly develop and complete their proposal before submitting it to respective organizations (MoST China and PSF). **MoST China and PSF do not match the collaborating partners.**
- Project proposal must mention detailed information i.e. objectives, methodology, budget, year wise work plan etc. as per prescribed format.
- The Submission of Joint Research Projects should be completely filled and submitted by each Chinese scientist to MoST China and Pakistani scientists to PSF online.
- Proposals submitted individually from any single side will not be processed further.
- The duration of the projects should not exceed two years.
- PSF will fund up to 10 Million per project and require:
 - a. For each project, the collaborating teams from both countries must jointly publish at least two papers.
 - b. The Chinese team must host at least two members of the Pakistani partner team for consecutive visits to China more than three months.
 - c. The Pakistani team must host at least two members of the Chinese partner team for visits to Pakistan for maximum 60 days once a year.
- An individual can submit one proposal only.

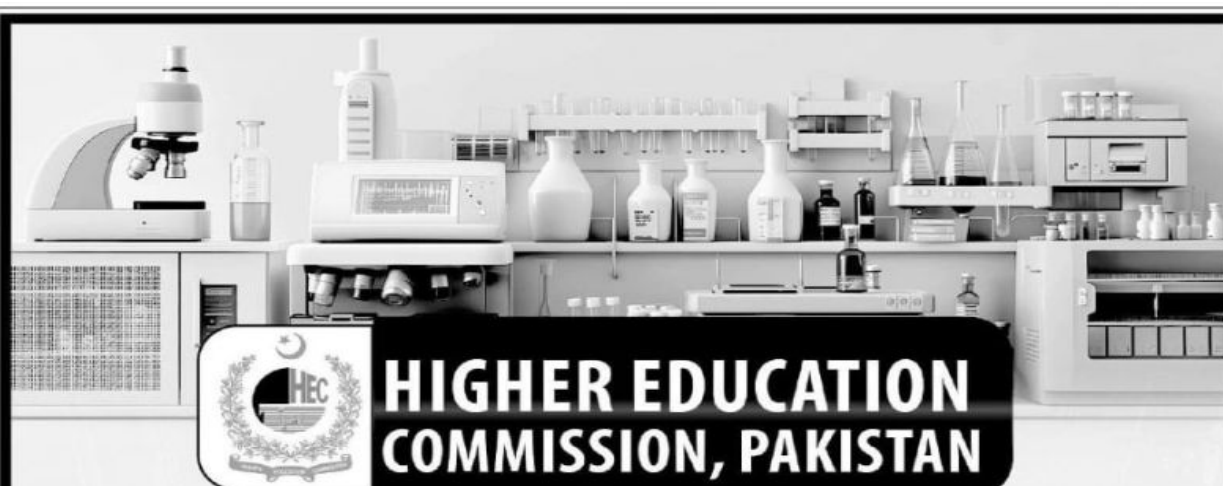
For submission at PSF please click link below; <https://rgms.psf.gov.pk/rgms/login.aspx>

For information at Chinese Side please visit: https://service.most.gov.cn/kjjh_tztg_all/20251023/5778.html

Deadline

December 05, 2025 at ORIC-UAF
December 16, 2025 at PSF

No proposal will be entertained after ORIC Deadline



HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION, PAKISTAN

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS ACCESS TO SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTATION PROGRAM (ASIP) 2025-26

The Higher Education Commission, Pakistan (HEC) invites applications under the **Access to Scientific Instrumentation Program (ASIP)** for the year **2025-26**. The programme provides **financial support to PhD scholars** enrolled in **public sector universities** of Pakistan, enabling access to advanced scientific and analytical facilities at labs of public sector universities/ R&D organisations across the country. This initiative aims to promote high-quality research and ensure timely completion of doctoral studies

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Only PhD students enrolled in public sector universities of Pakistan are eligible to apply.
- The applicant's research synopsis/proposal must be approved by the competent university forum (Ethical Review Board, Advanced Studies & Research Board, Directorate of Research, etc.).
- The applicants must apply **at least twelve (12) weeks prior** to sample analysis.
- The applicants may only apply for those tests which are **not available in their own university/institute**. If the test equipment is available in the institute and the applicant is not using that facility, he/she must provide detailed justification for using the test facility at other institute/university.
- The supervisor can recommend a maximum four (04) ASIP applications in one fiscal year.

KEY FEATURES

- The maximum funding available for sample analysis for each applicant is **Rs. 200,000/year** (i.e., from July 1 to June 30).
- The applicant may submit multiple applications but, the **total disbursement must not exceed Rs. 200,000/year or three disbursements in total during the PhD programme**
- Tests must be conducted at **public sector universities or R&D organisations**.
- Payments will be made by HEC directly to the service provider after satisfactory completion of analysis.
- Applications are **accepted throughout the year** via the online portal.

HOW TO APPLY

Application forms must be submitted to HEC via online portal

(<https://research.hec.gov.pk>).

Applicants are encouraged to apply well in advance of their proposed analysis timeline.

For Further Information and application submission, please visit:

HEC website: <https://www.hec.gov.pk/site/ASIP>

Apply via Online Portal: <https://research.hec.gov.pk>

Email contact: asip@hec.gov.pk Contact: 051-90401912, 051-90401934-35

PID/13663/25

UAF HOSTS SECOND CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON GM AND NON-GM CORN POLICY

The University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) convened its second consultative session on Tuesday to deliberate policy recommendations concerning Genetically Modified (GM) and non-GM corn in Pakistan. The meeting focused on addressing key challenges and exploring opportunities to enhance productivity, harness technological potential, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Organized by the Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics (PBG), the session was chaired by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali. In his remarks, Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali emphasized that maize ranks as the third most important cereal crop in Pakistan after wheat and rice. He underscored the urgency of adopting advanced technologies to boost yield and combat climate-induced pest infestations, which have led to increased pesticide use, higher production costs, and health concerns. He noted that UAF has initiated a series of sessions to explore viable solutions for both GM and non-GM corn cultivation.

Vice Chancellor of Muhammad Nawaz Shareef University of Agriculture Multan, Dr Asif Ali, stressed the need for climate-resilient agricultural technologies. He advocated for the strategic use of modern innovations to deliver tangible outcomes and elaborated on the Seed Act and National Agriculture Biotechnology Policy. Dr Asif Ali proposed a phased approach: initially permitting GMO cultivation for select crops, followed by a broader evaluation of biologically suitable GMOs with consideration for export dynamics.

Amanda Forester, Seed and Trait Lead at Bayer Asia Pacific, highlighted the regional lag in GM corn adoption, noting that Pakistani growers risk falling behind neighboring countries. She emphasized that developers possess tools and resources capable of enhancing sustainability, improving crop quality, and reducing pesticide dependency.

Dr Abid Mahmood, Chief Executive of the Punjab Agricultural Research Board (PARB), pointed out that



many Muslim countries are trailing in technological advancement. He called for a shift in mindset to embrace innovation for a better future. Other distinguished speakers included Dean Agriculture Prof Dr Ghulam Murtaza, Chairman PBG Prof Dr Azeem Iqbal, Chair Agriculture Policy Prof Dr Asif Kamran, Dr Muhammad Shoukat Ali, Dr Sajjad Ur Rehman, Dr Qamar Shakeel, Talal Hakeem, Dr Zafar Hayyat, Dr Muhammad Aslam, Brig. Sohail, Brig. Talha, and several other notable experts.

Upcoming Event

12
November
2025

Research Proposal/
Grant Writing
Workshop

Patron in Chief:

Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali
Vice Chancellor

Editorial Board:

Dr. Khuram Zia, Assistant Professor
Dr. Humera Razzaq, Deputy Director ORIC
Ms. Aisha Arshad, Assistant Prof.
Muhammad Hanif Ch., Admin Officer



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