

HEC NRPU 2026–27 -FAQs

Question 1: What is the HEC NRPU 2026–27 program?

Answer:

The National Research Program for Universities, or NRPU 2026–27, is a research funding initiative of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. It aims to support high-quality, innovative, interdisciplinary, and solution-oriented research relevant to Pakistan’s socio-economic development, industry, and society.

Question 2: How many major research domains are included in this call?

Answer:

There are three major research domains:

1. Social, Behavioral, Economic and Human Sciences
2. Natural and Emerging Sciences
3. Product, Process and Technology Development

Question 3: What type of research can be submitted under Social, Behavioral, Economic and Human Sciences?

Answer:

This category is an open call for basic research across Social, Behavioral, Economic and Human Sciences.

Question 4: What is the focus of Natural and Emerging Sciences?

Answer:

This category focuses on specific thematic areas aligned with national priorities, emerging technologies, and socio-economic challenges.

Question 5: What is the focus of Product, Process and Technology Development?

Answer:

This category focuses on specific problem-oriented thematic areas related to product, process, and technology development.

Question 6: Is industry collaboration required?

Answer:

Yes. Industry collaboration is **mandatory** for proposals submitted under the Product, Process and Technology Development category.

Question 7: What is the maximum duration of an NRPU project?

Answer:

The maximum duration is **24 months**.

Question 8: Is the NRPU application process conducted in one stage?

Answer:

No. The application process consists of **two stages**. First, researchers submit a project outline. Shortlisted first-stage proposals will then be invited to submit a detailed research proposal at the second stage.

Question 9: What needs to be submitted at the first stage?

Answer:

Researchers need to submit their **research proposal outline** through the HEC online portal.

Question 10: What happens after the first-stage submission?

Answer:

The submitted outlines will go through the first-stage selection process. Only shortlisted proposals will be invited to submit a detailed research proposal during the second stage.

Question 11: What is the deadline for submitting the project outline?

Answer:

The deadline is **Monday, October 30, 2026**.

Question 12: Where can researchers find the eligibility criteria and application guidelines?

Answer:

Researchers can find general information, eligibility criteria, application guidelines, and other relevant details through the HEC NRPU website/webpage.

Question 13: Where should the proposal outline be submitted?

Answer:

The proposal outline must be submitted through the **HEC online portal**.

Question 14: Are international research collaborations encouraged?

Answer:

Yes. Pakistani researchers are encouraged to submit joint research proposals in collaboration with researchers and institutions from countries including Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, China, the USA, the UK, the European Union, Central Asian states, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, Singapore, and other developed countries.

Question 15: What is the purpose of international collaboration under this call?

Answer:

The purpose is to encourage the co-creation of innovative, interdisciplinary, and solution-oriented research projects through international research engagements on a voluntary basis.

Question 16: What should researchers do before preparing their proposal?

Answer:

Researchers should first identify the appropriate research domain, carefully review the eligibility and application requirements, identify a relevant and researchable problem, and then prepare their first-stage project outline according to the HEC requirements.

Question 17: What should researchers remember most about this call?

Answer:

There are three key points to remember: first, select the appropriate research domain; second, follow the two-stage submission process; and third, submit the first-stage project outline before the **October 30, 2026 deadline**.

Question 18: what is threshold for the Similarity index and AI content?

Answer:

19% Similarity Index and an AI Content Threshold of 25% under the NRPU Proposal would be considered acceptable.

Question 19: Who is eligible to apply as Principal Investigator (PI)?

Answer: The Principal Investigator (PI) must be a regular faculty member, researcher, or eligible academic staff member affiliated with a recognized Pakistani higher education institution that meets HEC eligibility requirements. Applicants should carefully review the official eligibility criteria available on the HEC NRPU portal before submission.

Question 20: Can a faculty member submit more than one proposal as PI?

Answer: Researchers should follow the HEC policy regarding the maximum number of proposals and projects allowed as Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator. Any restrictions stated in the official call guidelines will apply.

Question 21: Can researchers from different universities collaborate on a proposal?

Answer: Yes. Inter-university collaboration is encouraged. Researchers from different Pakistani universities and research institutions may participate as Co-Principal Investigators or collaborators where permitted under the program guidelines.

Question 22: Are early-career researchers encouraged to apply?

Answer: Yes. Early-career researchers with innovative and impactful research ideas are encouraged to participate, provided they meet the eligibility criteria specified by HEC.

Question 23: Can postgraduate students be included in the project?

Answer: Yes. MS/MPhil and PhD students may be involved in project activities, research assistance, data collection, experimentation, thesis work, and publications according to HEC regulations.

Question 24: What characteristics should a strong NRPV proposal have?

Answer: A strong proposal should demonstrate:

- Originality and innovation
- Scientific merit
- National relevance
- Clear objectives
- Practical outcomes
- Feasible methodology
- Capacity-building potential
- Strong implementation plan

Question 25: Is multidisciplinary research encouraged?

Answer: Yes. HEC strongly encourages interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research that combines expertise from multiple disciplines to address complex national challenges.

Question 26: What kind of societal impact should a proposal demonstrate?

Answer: Researchers should clearly explain how the project will contribute to:

- Economic development
- Social well-being
- Public policy improvement
- Industrial growth
- Environmental sustainability
- Technological advancement
- National priorities

Question 27: If a faculty member is involved in multiple NRPU projects as PI or Co-PI, how will the honorarium be paid?

Answer:

If a faculty member is serving as Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) in two or more NRPU projects, he/she shall be entitled to receive honorarium for only one project. Similarly, if a faculty member is serving as a Principal Investigator (PI) in one project and as Co-PI in another project, he/she will be eligible to receive only one honorarium, in accordance with HEC rules and funding regulations. Researchers are advised to review the latest HEC NRPU guidelines for any specific conditions or updates regarding honorarium payments.

You may also include a shorter version:

Question 28: Can a faculty member receive honorarium from multiple NRPU projects simultaneously?

Answer:

No. A faculty member who is involved in multiple NRPU projects, whether as PI, Co-PI, or a combination of both, is entitled to receive honorarium from only one project at a time, subject to HEC funding rules and approved project arrangements.