NRPU — Frequently Asked Questions

1. **About NRPU & Eligibility**

Q1. What is NRPU?

NRPU stands for National Research Program for Universities. It is a flagship Research Program of HEC for funding research grants on competitive merit for high-quality and promising scientific research projects that demonstrate strategic relevance and cast impact to the local industry and society.

Q2. Who is eligible to be a Principal Investigator (PI)?

Any individual with the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to carry out relevant research may work with his or her institution to develop a grant application. The PI must be a regular faculty member of a Higher Education Institution (public or private) or hold a contract equivalent to the length of project duration. The PI must have an advanced academic degree (PhD or MCPS/FCPS with two (02) years of research experience) and relevant experience of working as a researcher.

Q3. Can faculty members serving in public sector universities on visiting or Adhoc or on IPFP apply for NRPU?

No, they are not eligible.

Q4. Can a PI apply for an NRPU grant if he/she is already executing an NRPU project?

Yes, the PI can apply, but he/she has to provide proof of project completion and submit a project completion certificate with the new NRPU application.

Q5. Can a faculty working on an ongoing NRPU project as PI become PI for another NRPU project?

No. A PI cannot have two grants at the same time and is not eligible to work on another NRPU project as PI.

Q6. Can a faculty working on an ongoing NRPU project as Co-PI become PI for another NRPU project?

Yes, he/she can be a Co-PI for another NRPU project.

Q7. How many Co-PIs can be added in one project? In how many projects can a person act as Co-PI?

It depends upon the scope of the project. A project can have more than one Co-PI as per project requirements. There is no restriction for a person to be Co-PI in only one project.

Q8. What are the defined themes under which NRPU can be submitted?

The program is open for all disciplines. There are no specific themes.

Q9. If a PI is working on any other HEC research grant (e.g., TDF research grant), is he/she eligible to apply for the ongoing NRPU call for proposals as PI?

Yes, he/she can, subject to provision of a project completion certificate.

Q10. In previous calls, the funding limit was linked to the cumulative impact factor of the PI. Is this policy still valid?

No, the previous policy is not applicable for the ongoing call for proposals. Any position in a paper is acceptable.

Q11. A faculty does not have prior experience of NRPU/TDF etc. Can he/she apply for an NRPU grant as PI?

Yes, if he/she fulfills the eligibility criteria as mentioned on the NRPU website.

Q12. Can a PI and Co-PI be from different universities?

Yes, if a Co-PI of the same research field is not available at the same university. However, every effort must be made for the PI and Co-PI to be from the same university.

Q13. If a Co-PI is from a different university, do we need to add his/her details against the "Academic Collaborators" too?

Yes, all desired details are required and must be incorporated.

2. **Roles and Responsibilities**

Q14. What is the PI's role and responsibility?

The Principal Investigator leads the project team, supervising and managing overall project activities for timely progress, and is responsible for timely submission of project progress reports to HEC through the Grantee. The PI is also responsible to report to the responsible office at the Grantee Institution on project-related matters as per the guidelines.

Q15. What is the University's role and responsibility?

The University is responsible to provide oversight of project implementation in accordance with HEC policies and practices as well as applicable government rules and regulations, and to ensure timely preparation of required reports. It is also responsible to monitor project performance to ensure timely accomplishment of project goals in accordance with objectives and scope, and adherence to the terms and conditions of the grant.

Q16. What is the role of ORIC/Research Offices?

The ORIC/Research Office or any other designated office authorized for processing research projects at the Grantee institution is responsible to coordinate and process appropriate actions with HEC via the HEC online portal and/or in the form and manner prescribed/communicated by HEC for Award notices, submission of project progress reports, personnel changes, No Cost Extensions, and other requests and notifications in relation to the project.

Q17. Who is responsible for submission of project progress reports?

The PI is responsible for timely submission of progress reports through the authorized Research Office/ORIC of the Grantee Institution.

Q18. What is the PI's most important responsibility regarding reporting?

The PI is responsible for ensuring timely and complete submission of project progress reports through the authorized office of the Grantee Institution.

3. Project Duration, Effective Date & No-Cost Extension

Q19. When does the project officially start?

The Effective Date of the Award is the date on which the first installment of the grant is released to the Grantee Institution (PI/University) by HEC.

Q20. What is the Funding Period or Grant Period of a project?

The Funding Period starts from the Effective Date and ends upon expiry of the approved Project Duration. If a No-Cost Extension is granted by HEC, the Funding Period will end on the date as extended and communicated to the Grantee. All expenses to be financed with the Grant shall be incurred during the Funding Period.

Q21. What is the Project Duration?

The project duration is the duration in months for implementation of the project as per the award notice.

Q22. Can a PI request a No-Cost Extension (NCE)?

Yes. A formal request for No-Cost Extension must be submitted by the Grantee to HEC at least thirty (30) calendar days before expiry of the Project Duration, with proper justification, estimated unspent funds, and a plan for their utilization within the approved objectives and scope.

Q23. How much No-Cost Extension can normally be granted?

HEC may allow a No-Cost Extension of up to ninety (90) calendar days (03 months), subject to the condition that no additional funds will be allowed under the Grant and timelines for reporting requirements will be adjusted accordingly.

Q24. Is the approved 03-month extension considered a delayed period?

No. Where an extension of up to three months is duly approved by HEC within the permissible extendable period, that period is not treated as a delayed period of the project.

Q25. Will PI/Co-PI honorarium and ORIC/University overheads be admissible during an approved 03-month extension?

Yes. As per the approved clarification, where the extension is granted within the approved extendable period, PI/Co-PI honorarium and ORIC/University overheads remain admissible.

Q26. Can a PI continue project activities after the original expiry date while waiting for approval of NCE?

No. The PI/Grantee must not make commitments or incur expenditures after expiry of the project duration in anticipation of HEC approval of the No-Cost Extension.

Q27. Can an NCE be requested merely to utilize unspent funds?

No. An NCE cannot be allowed merely for the purpose of utilizing unspent funds. The request must establish a genuine need and provide justification.

Q28. What is the difference between an approved extension and a delayed project?

Approved Extension: An extension of up to three months duly approved by HEC within the permissible extendable period. This period is not treated as project delay, and the approved clarification allows PI/Co-PI honorarium and ORIC/University overheads. **Delay:** Failure to submit the required report within the prescribed reporting timeline, including the applicable permissible period, or failure to complete/report within the approved project duration and duly approved extension. Researchers should distinguish between a properly approved extension and an unauthorized delay.

4. **Proposal Submission**

Q29. Is the Full Project Proposal required to be uploaded on the prescribed template as other documents?

Yes. When the call is open, applications are submitted and received through the online RGMS (Research Grant Management System) portal.

Q30. Are quotations required to be uploaded for purchase of equipment/supplies?

No, this is not mandatory at submission time. However, it can be demanded if required for review or audit purposes.

Q31. Do PIs need to submit hard copies for NRPU grants, or is only online proposal submission at HEC e-portal acceptable?

For the ongoing call for proposals of NRPU, no hardcopies are required. Only softcopies are accepted, which can be submitted on the online portal.

5. **Annual Progress Reports**

Q32. How frequently are progress reports required?

For a one-year project, reporting is normally biannual. For two-, three-, or multi-year projects, reporting is normally annual. The exact reporting schedule should be followed according to the approved project duration and HEC requirements.

Q33. What are the main components of a progress report?

A progress report consists of:

1. Technical Progress Report
2. Financial Report

The technical report covers accomplishments, outputs/outcomes, participants and collaborations, impacts, challenges, and work completed/remaining. The financial report covers expenditure, commitments, project funds, profit/interest, balance, and budget requirements for the next period.

Q34. When should a progress report be submitted?

The prescribed progress report should preferably be submitted at least 15 days before the end of the reporting period and in any case not later than 15 days after expiry of the reporting period.

Q35. What happens if a report is not submitted within 15 days after expiry of the reporting period?

The report is treated as a delayed report, and HEC may issue a notice requiring compliance. Failure to comply within the specified notice period may result in further action under the Grant Agreement and Guidelines.

Q36. Does delayed submission of one annual report mean that the project is automatically terminated?

Not necessarily. The applicable SOP provides an opportunity for compliance through submission and satisfactory review of the overdue report. However, continued failure to submit required reports may result in withholding of funds, recovery action, and, in serious cases, termination/closure of the project.

Q37. If an annual report is delayed but subsequently submitted and accepted, can the next installment be released?

Subject to satisfactory review and fulfillment of applicable requirements, the pending installment may be processed. However, the consequences applicable to the period of actual delay must be observed under the approved SOPs.

Q38. If the PI submits the final report without timely submission of an earlier annual report, what happens?

The final report will be reviewed. Eligible project expenditure may be settled subject to satisfactory review and verification. The applicable treatment of PI/Co-PI honorarium and University/ORIC overheads for any actual delayed reporting period will be determined under the relevant SOP.

6. **Financial Management & Expenditure**

Q39. Can project funds be used for any expenditure considered necessary by the PI?

No. Grant funds may only be used for eligible expenditure under the approved budget heads and in connection with the approved project.

Q40. Can expenditure be incurred before the Award?

Expenses made or committed before the Award/signing of the Agreement are not allowed.

Q41. Can expenditure be incurred after the project Funding Period?

Normally, no. Grant-funded expenses must be incurred during the Funding Period. The PI/Grantee should therefore plan procurement and expenditure well before project expiry.

Q42. Can the PI transfer funds from one approved budget head to another?

Prior approval of HEC must be obtained for re-appropriation from one budget line item to another eligible expenditure head.

Q43. Is a separate project bank account required?

Yes. HEC requires appropriate details of a separate bank account for the project, jointly operated by the Grantee's authorized official(s) and the PI, as specified in the Award/Grant Agreement.

Q44. What financial documents are required with progress reports?

The financial report should include the required Statement of Expenditure and relevant financial information. Additional documents include the bank statement and expenditure statement duly signed by the PI, Resident Auditor, and Treasurer, as applicable.

Q45. What happens to profit/interest earned on project funds?

Profit or interest earned on project funds must be reflected in the financial reporting and accounted for in accordance with the HEC Grant Agreement and applicable financial requirements.

7. **Budget Categories & Personnel Costs**

Q46. What categories of expenses can be budgeted under HEC competitive research grants?

HEC allows grantees to budget for four categories of expenses in competitive research grants : personnel costs (internal as well as external), travel costs, costs of equipment, consumables and services, and overhead costs. Detailed financial provisions set out the limits on the nature and amount of expenses that can be claimed under each of the four specified budgetary heads.

Q47. What general conditions apply to the provision of personnel costs?

The following general conditions apply:

- The role of each person in the project must be stated clearly and justified, including the time commitment (as per cent of full time).
- For faculty members, the budget request should include their name, designation, department/institute, and university. Future changes would be subject to approval of HEC.
- The university should affirm in writing that the time commitment of the university personnel engaged in a project (to the extent of their time committed) does not conflict with the time commitment for other projects and teaching/academic duties.
- Only the remuneration of technical staff can be billed under the project. Administrative or secretarial staff, including the project coordinator, should be covered under the university overheads.
- Any false statement in these matters will result in automatic cancellation of the project, recovery of advance payments, and blacklisting of the faculty member as well as the institution for 2 years.

Q48. What are the honorarium limits for faculty members (PIs and Co-PIs)?

Faculty members (PIs and Co-PIs) will commit their time to the research project as percent of full time. One honorarium per year is admissible to the PI as per the following limits and payable after successful completion of the project within approved or allowed extended period:

- Assistant Professor: Rs. 150,000/-
- Associate Professor: Rs. 175,000/-
- Professor: Rs. 200,000/-

On project completion, one honorarium is admissible to the Co-PI on the same rates as admissible to the PI. Honorarium to PIs and Co-PIs is allowed in only one research project at a time.

Q49. What are the stipend limits for university students engaged for research project?

University students may be engaged as per the following limits:

- PhD students: @Rs. 80,000 per month
- MS/MPhil Students: @Rs. 40,000 per month
- Undergraduate students: @Rs. 20,000 per month

Subject to approval of their supervisors, and based on their course load, students at the thesis stage will be allowed to allocate their time to research projects. Only the university's own students can be included under this heading.

Q50. Can research associates only include MPhil or PhD students? Can bachelor students be included in the project as research associates?

Yes, as per new policy there is a provision for bachelor students to engage in research projects @ Rs. 20,000/- per month.

Q51. What are the stipend rates for other project staff (Research Assistants, Research Associates, Research Fellows, Senior Fellows)?

Other stipends for project staff are allowed as per the following limits:

- Research Assistant (BS/MS/MPhil, equivalent to Lecturer): Rs. 100,000/- per month
- Research Associate (Fresh PhD, equivalent to Asstt. Prof): Rs. 130,000/- per month
- Research Fellow (PhD with 9 years' experience, equivalent to Assoc. Prof.): As per last pay drawn by the fellow
- Senior Fellow (PhD with 15 years' experience, equivalent to Professor): As per last pay drawn by the fellow

Q52. Are full-time team members required to be hired on a particular scale?

It is proposed that all full-time team members be hired on PPS scale to standardize the packages and terms & conditions for competitive hiring.

Q53. What are the contractual requirements for project personnel?

Each person appointed to a project should receive a formal contract, specifying all the terms of employment, including salary, benefits, and the duration of engagement.

Q54. How is experience against Research Associate, Research Fellow, and Senior Fellow positions treated?

The experience against the positions of Research Associate, Research Fellow, and Senior Fellow will be treated as postdoc fellowship.

Q55. Can a postdoc fellow on study leave with pay draw salary under the project?

No. A postdoc fellow on study leave with pay from his/her parent organization/university is not entitled to draw salary under the project.

Q56. Does project employment create an entitlement or expectation of regular employment?

No. Project employment should not create an entitlement or expectation of regular employment.

Q57. What are the rules for short-term consultants?

Short-term consultants may be foreign nationals (including those of Pakistani origin, dual nationals, or Pakistani nationals). The respective remuneration rates would be based on market conditions, typically on a per day basis. Total remuneration for all short-term consultants should not exceed 10% of the total direct HR cost of the project.

Q58. What are the rules for engaging staff on daily wages in short-term projects?

Short-term projects may engage staff on daily wages (e.g., enumerators, data collectors, etc.) at a maximum rate of Rs. 25,000 per month. Project employment should not create an entitlement or expectation of regular employment.

8. **Equipment, Consumables & Services**

Q59. What general conditions apply to equipment, consumables, and services costs?

The following general conditions apply:

- Equipment and Consumables should be itemized separately. However, the total cost under these heads may not be greater than 70% of the direct cost of the project.
- For each item under Equipment, and each item under Consumables, provide the name, description of equipment, specifications, unit cost, quantity, and purpose.
- For Equipment, Consumables, and Services, the university needs to certify in writing that it does not have access to the said equipment, consumables, and service otherwise.
- 10% additional amount against approved equipment budget for imported items may be admissible to account for any currency rate fluctuation, subject to provision of justification and approval of HEC.

Q60. What are examples of equipment that can be billed to the project?

A few examples are provided here. These, and similar items, could be billed to the project if otherwise justified:

- Scientific lab Equipment: tools and equipment used in laboratories for research work relevant to the project. Some examples are DNA sequencers, electrometers, or spectrometers.
- IT equipment: some examples are servers, network equipment, routers, or communication equipment.
- Specialized Software/IT Applications: e.g., LabView, AutoCAD, MATLAB.

Q61. What are examples of consumables that can be billed to the project?

A few examples are provided here. These, and similar items, could be billed to the project if otherwise justified:

- Lab Chemicals: e.g., chlorates, persulfates, peroxides, oxidizing acids, methanol, ethanol, or reagents.
- Glassware: e.g., beakers, flasks, or test tubes.
- Plastic wares: e.g., pipettes.
- Expendable supplies: e.g., preserving and cleaning material, fuel, medicines, personal protective equipment (i.e., gloves, masks, or surgical caps).
- Accessories: small tools and accessories used routinely in labs, e.g., kits, PCR plates, ladders, sealers, magnetic stands.

Q62. What services are allowable under the project?

- Access to scientific equipment: cost of access to sophisticated lab or research equipment not available in host institution.
- Service contract for repair/maintenance of purchased scientific equipment: The service cost should not exceed 25% of the cost of current price of the same/similar model.
- Subscription to open access journals or publications: provided these are not already covered under HEC's agreement with the HEI.
- Management Cost for organizing national level conferences, workshops, or seminars: in cases where such dissemination of research results are outsourced to external professional bodies.
- Limited commercialization and development costs: these will be allowed only for research grants (e.g., TTSF and RTTG) that explicitly include product development and commercialization goals. The admissible expenses are:
    - Patent filing Fee
    - Consultancy Services for product development (limited 10% of the direct cost of the project)
    - Legal and Financial Services: related to intellectual property rights, research commercialization, or licensing agreements.
    - Marketing Services: for marketing of prototype or proposed product to appropriate investors or stakeholders.

9. **Travel Costs**

Q63. What does Travel Cost cover?

Travel Cost covers expenses of project team (faculty and students and other project personnel (Research Assistants, Research Associate, Research Fellow) related to research/field work, participation in project meetings, attending national or international conferences or workshops to present research results from the project.

Q64. What general conditions apply to travel costs?

Travel budget must be justified by providing purpose of visit, the city, the country, the number of travelers, and estimated costs per visit. Budget limit for Local travel is Maximum Rs. 150,000/- per year as per actual. Prior approval of HEC must be obtained for each project-related international travel with proper justification.

Q65. What are the limits and allowable expenses for international travel?

For Faculty, students, other project personnel (maximum one visit per year):

Purpose of Expenses	Limits	Allowed Expenses
Costs of participation in foreign country for fieldwork, research work or meetings under the project	Max one visit per year for a visit duration of not more than 30 days	Travel expenses of foreign round trip and Daily Allowance including accommodation as per Government rules
Cost of participation in international Conferences, Seminar, Workshops, Symposium to present research results under the project	Max 1 visit per year for a visit duration of not more than 6 days	Registration fee as per actual, TA, DA including accommodation as per HEC Travel Grant Policy and Government rules.

10. **University /ORIC Overheads**

Q66. What are the purposes for allowing payment of overhead costs to sponsoring HEIs?

There are three purposes:

1. To compensate HEIs for expenses needed to provide research support in the form of campus facilities, secretarial or administrative services, tuition waivers to research assistants, or project development expenses.
2. To enable HEIs to build up a professional research support system in order to enable their faculty members to attract research funding from other sources as well, including, e.g., capacity building activities.
3. To ensure that universities exercise proper quality control over research products.

Q67. How should the overhead amount be used?

The overhead amount should go directly into the research management budget of universities, which may allocate it for various purposes according to the needs of each project as well as the overall demands of professional research management. In case of multi-institutional projects, the overhead costs are expected to be shared on the basis of the percentage of funds allocated for each institution.

Q68. What are the three tiers of University/ORIC overheads allowed by HEC?

HEC allows three tiers of University overheads or institutional costs, as a percent of the total direct cost of the project: 5%, 10%, and 15%.

- Basic (5% Overheads): This covers projects that do not require allocation of dedicated office space or dedicated secretarial or support staff. It covers the basic research support services, i.e., accounts management, project reporting, auditing, office supplies (e.g., pens, staplers, or stationery), and monitoring and evaluation. Researchers are expected to use their own offices and regular university facilities.
- Extra (10% Overheads): In addition to the services listed in Basic, the HEI also provides the following additional facilities: support staff (daily wage clerical or manual labor, secretariat staff), campus expenses (e.g., use of dedicated office, unit, or building), utility costs, cost of access to digital resources (e.g., Digital Library, PERN), maintenance of scientific equipment, and/or access to laboratories.
- Performance (15% Overheads): In addition to the services listed in Extra, the HEI may demonstrate superior performance on behalf of the ORICs or other research management institutions.

Q69. Are HEIs allowed to include normal administrative expenses when overheads are provided?

No. The provision of overheads means that HEIs will not be allowed to include normal administrative expenses (e.g., administrative salaries, TA/DA, honorariums, bonuses, or stipends).

11. **Installments & Release of Funds**

Q70. Is the entire approved grant released at once?

No. Grant installments are released according to the approved disbursement plan.

Q71. What are the normal installments for an 18–24 month project?

Unless otherwise stated in the Award Notice:

- 1st Installment: 60%
- 2nd Installment: 30%
- Final Installment: 10%, generally for PI/Co-PI honorarium and overheads.

Q72. What conditions apply to release of subsequent installments?

Release is subject to factors including:

- Timely submission of required progress reports;
- Satisfactory evaluation of reports/presentations;
- Completion of required documentation;
- Compliance with Grant Terms & Conditions; and
- Availability of funds with HEC.

12. **Project Changes & PI Issues**

Q73. Can the PI change the approved objectives or scope of the project?

No. Objectives and scope approved by HEC at the time of Award cannot be changed by the PI/Grantee without the required HEC approval.

Q74. What should a PI do if circumstances beyond his/her control affect project implementation?

The PI, through the Grantee, should immediately notify HEC in writing where circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the PI/Grantee make project implementation impractical or significantly hinder progress.

Q75. Can a PI go on leave without informing HEC?

No. The PI should inform the Grantee where leave/absence will affect active supervision of the project. For an absence of less than six months, arrangements for project oversight must be submitted to HEC for approval, normally at least 30 days before departure or as soon as practicable.

Q76. What happens if the PI is absent for more than six months?

Depending upon the circumstances, the PI/Grantee may request:

1. Nomination of a Substitute PI;
2. Transfer of the grant where the PI moves to another eligible organization; or
3. Termination of the grant.

Q77. Can a university allow the PI to join another organization or proceed on leave before HEC approves the substitute/transfer arrangement?

No. The Guidelines provide that the Grantee should not relieve the PI or allow NOC for leave/joining another organization before the required HEC permission/arrangement has been approved.

13. Transfer of Project

Q78. Can a project be transferred to another university?

A transfer may be considered subject to the applicable requirements, including eligibility of the new institution, consent of the concerned organizations/PI, and HEC approval.

Q79. Can a project be transferred during the first year?

Normally, HEC will not consider transfer of a project to another institution during the first year from the Effective Date.

Q80. What happens to equipment purchased under the project if the project is transferred?

Equipment purchased with the grant should remain available to the new organization for conducting the project activities, with the necessary arrangements made through HEC.

14. **Project Completion & Closure**

Q81. When is a project considered successfully completed?

A project is considered successfully completed after satisfactory evaluation of the final technical and financial progress reports and fulfillment of administrative requirements, including refund of any unspent balance and settlement of pending releases/payments.

Q82. Is submission of the final report alone sufficient for project closure?

No. Project closure requires satisfactory evaluation of the final report and completion of relevant administrative and financial settlement requirements.

Q83. What happens to an unspent balance at project completion?

The unspent balance is required to be refunded/adjusted in accordance with the applicable HEC procedures and Grant Agreement.

Q84. What happens if a refund is due but is not paid?

A project cannot be formally closed where a refund is due. The Grantee is required to repay the amount due within the specified period after HEC's refund request, failing which further action may be initiated.

15. **Consequences of Persistent Delay / Non-Submission**

Q85. What happens if required reports remain outstanding even after the approved project duration and extension expire?

If required annual/final reports remain unsubmitted after expiry of the approved timeline, including the authorized extension, the project may be treated as defaulted/abnormally delayed and recovery/closure proceedings may be initiated under the applicable SOPs.

Q86. Can HEC recover the amount already disbursed in case of default?

Yes. Under the applicable provisions, HEC may require recovery of the disbursed amount along with applicable bank profit/interest where the project is defaulted and the prescribed requirements are not fulfilled.

Q87. Are there restrictions on a PI whose project remains in serious default?

Yes. The Guidelines/SOPs provide serious consequences for defaulted projects. A PI receiving a letter of displeasure under the specified provisions may become ineligible to submit research proposals to HEC and participate in HEC research proposal review/evaluation processes for five years.

Q88. Can an institution with several unresolved projects receive new HEC research grants?

An HEI having five or more abnormally delayed or unresolved projects may become ineligible for future HEC research grants until the outstanding projects are resolved.

Q89. Can recovery be adjusted against institutional funds?

For public-sector universities/HEIs, where a project is declared delayed, unsettled, or recoverable during DAC/PAC proceedings, the recoverable amount may be deducted/adjusted from the institution's recurring grant in accordance with applicable Government/AGPR rules and HEC financial procedures.

16. **Audit, Records & Monitoring**

Q90. What records should the university maintain for an HEC-funded project?
The Grantee should maintain adequate supporting records, including:

- Stock registers;
- Cash/accounting records;
- Logbooks;
- Receipts and vouchers;
- Salary slips;
- Progress reports;
- Bank records/statements;
- Audit reports; and
- Other project-related documentation.

Q91. Can HEC inspect the project and financial records?

Yes. HEC or authorized inspection/audit teams may inspect project records and verify expenditures, income/royalties, and project operations at reasonable times and upon reasonable notice.

Q92. Can HEC conduct a site visit?

Yes. HEC, through authorized representatives, Scientific Review Panel members, or subject experts, may conduct site visits to review project accomplishments, administration, and management of the grant.

17. **Practical Guidance for PIs & Researchers**

Q93. What should a PI do to avoid project delay?

The PI should:

1. Maintain a project activity calendar against the approved implementation plan.
2. Start preparation of progress reports well before the due date.
3. Keep technical and financial records updated.
4. Ensure procurement is completed within the Funding Period.
5. Coordinate regularly with the ORIC/Research Office and Finance Office.
6. Request NCE at least 30 days before project expiry where genuinely required.
7. Never assume that an extension has been approved until formal approval is received.
8. Ensure that all required reports and financial documents are submitted within the prescribed timelines.

Q94. What is the most important principle researchers should remember?

A research grant is governed by the approved proposal, implementation plan, approved budget, Grant Agreement, HEC Guidelines, and applicable SOPs. Timely reporting, proper financial documentation, compliance with approved objectives, and timely project settlement are essential for successful completion and closure of the project.