

AUN Research Development Grant Programme

Concept Note

1. Background

The ASEAN University Network (AUN) Research Development Grant Programme is a proposed initiative aimed at strengthening academic collaboration between ASEAN Member States through research, scholarly exchange, and international engagement. The programme seeks to support young researchers in conducting collaborative research on priority regional issues, while contributing to AUN's strategic objectives in research excellence, capacity building, and thought leadership. The programme is also designed to align with major AUN academic platforms, by encouraging selected grantees to disseminate their research findings through international conferences, workshops, and reputable academic publications.

2. Early-Career Researcher Leadership

To advance the Fund's capacity-building objective and expand research leadership opportunities for emerging scholars, the Principal Investigator shall be an early-career researcher, as defined in the Programme Guidelines. This requirement is based on the applicant's stage of research career and professional experience, irrespective of age, gender, nationality, or other personal characteristics. It is intended to address the limited opportunities available to early-career researchers to lead funded projects and to support the development of the next generation of research leaders.

An early-career researcher is defined as a researcher who obtained their Ph.D. within the past four years (i.e., on or after 15 February 2023 and no later than 15 February 2027), in accordance with the eligibility criteria specified in the Programme Guidelines.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the AUN Research Development Grant Programme are to:

- a. Promote collaborative research between young scholars from ASEAN Member States on issues of regional and global relevance.
- b. Support the production of high-quality research outputs, including publications in reputable, internationally indexed journals.
- c. Enhance academic exchange, networking, and international engagement among universities, research institutions, and experts across ASEAN.

- d. Strengthen AUN's role as a regional platform for research development and policy-relevant knowledge creation.
- e. Contribute academically to AUN flagship activities.

4. Priority Research Themes

For the initial implementation phase, the programme will focus on the following priority themes:

- a. Mental Health
- b. Climate Change
- c. Urban Renewal & Poverty Reduction

These themes reflect AUN's current strategic priorities and emerging regional challenges.

5. Principal Investigator

Principal Investigator include:

Early-career scholars (researchers who obtained their Ph.D. within the past four years, i.e., on or after 15 February 2023 and no later than 15 February 2027 from:

- ASEAN University Network Core Member - Any nationality is eligible.

Principal Investigator is expected to have:

- At least one refereed publication in international journals indexed in standardized data bases (Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, AGRICOLA, ERIC, H.W.Wilson)
- The capacity to complete research and produce publishable outputs within the project period
- Must have graduated from a Ph.D. degree program
- Must be an academic staff

6. Consortium Structure

Research proposals must be submitted by a consortium, with the following conditions:

- a. The lead institution must be **an AUN Core Member University**
- b. Minimum of 4 participating institutions/entities (Including lead institution)
- c. Consortium members may include:
 - AUN Core or Associate Member Universities or AUN+3
 - Non-AUN universities
 - Policy experts, or non-academic specialists
 - Private/Public sector, Industry partners, etc.

7. Grant Amount and Duration

Grant amount: USD 10,000 per project, per team.

Number of grants: 2 grants

Project duration:

- One (1) year
- Possible extension of up to six (6) months, subject to approval

Disbursement (indicative):

- a. 40% upon signing of the grant agreement and approval of progress report
- b. 40% upon submission and approval of interim report
- c. 20% Remaining balance upon submission of final report and publication

8. Expected Outputs

Each funded project is expected to deliver:

Required Report and publication

1. At least one academic paper submitted to or published in a reputable, and internationally recognised journals within a recognised database (Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, AGRICOLA, ERIC, H.W.Wilson), with proper acknowledgement of AUN and the AUN Research Development Grant Programme
2. Progress report, containing the following sections:
 - a. Rationale
 - b. Literature Review
 - c. Methodology
3. Interim report, containing the following sections:
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Literature Review
 - c. Methodology
 - d. Findings
 - e. Implication
4. Final Report, containing the following sections:
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Literature Review
 - c. Methodology
 - d. Findings
 - e. Implication

Presentation of research findings at:

- AUN Rectors Meeting

9. Expected Outcomes

The programme is expected to:

- Enhance research capacity and international exposure of young scholars
- Generate visible and high-impact research outputs for AUN
- Contribute to AUN's international profile and thought leadership

Implementation Timeline (Indicative)

- Call for applications: 15 October 2026
- Research Proposal Submission Period: 15 October 2026 – 15 February 2027 (23:59, GMT+7)
- Selection Process: 16 February 2027 – 30 April 2027
- Announcement of Selected Projects: 5 May 2027
- Project Commencement: 1 June 2027
- Final Research Report Submission Deadline: 31 May 2028