

Research and Innovation Policy of NIEPA



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1. Preamble

One of the major agenda of NIEPA is to undertake and promote research and innovation in areas related to policy, planning, administration, financing, and management of development programmes at all levels of education. Given the unique role of NIEPA as a national level resource organisation extending policy and technical support to the national and sub-national governments, the research at NIEPA assumes profound importance in generating new and innovative ideas and promoting strategic management of education in the country. With changing contours of public sector reforms and to improve efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure, research at NIEPA is expected to feed into decision-making processes. It is in this context, NIEPA gives renewed emphasis on its research and innovation function. Keeping in view the need for deepening research for promoting evidence based management of education, and at the same time, considering the provisions in the UGC regulations, 2018 "Minimum Qualifications of Teachers---" governing the research load and outputs of the faculty, NIEPA shall adopt the following policy for promoting research and innovation.

2. Nature and scope of research to be pursued at NIEPA

- 2.1 NIEPA shall engage in all sorts of research – i.e. inductive, deductive, action research, surveys, and assessment and evaluation studies.
- 2.2 Given its dual mandate as a university and an organization that acts as a ‘think tank’ for the Central as well as the State Governments, NIEPA shall look for the ‘right mix of research studies’ to be implemented in a given medium-term plan period. However, too much of descriptive research (documentation of a given phenomenon) in the absence of correlational and explanatory research may not help much in improving policy planning and management practices, which shall be kept in view while reviewing research proposals for consideration for funding by NIEPA.
- 2.3 As a national level resource organization, NIEPA shall adopt “what works clearing house approach (WWC)” for identifying the scope and priority areas of research in education. NIEPA shall pursue research (i.e. practice-oriented, action research, small scale exploratory studies, evaluation studies, etc.) not only to support practitioners, particularly at the sub-national levels but also use this as the best way to be in touch with states.
- 2.4 It is important to promote large-scale, multistage, longitudinal and collaborative research at NIEPA. It is more critical to promote small scale empirical research in

order to promote individual identity and areas of specialization of the faculty, and more importantly, to make research feasible. At the same time, inter-disciplinary perspective and approach to research design (mixed design) shall also be encouraged.

3. Promoting In-house and Sponsored Research

- 3.1 The medium-term research perspective of NIEPA, indicating thematic areas/topics of research, shall be developed in every planning cycle based on the research perspectives of individual departments.
- 3.2 A timeline for developing and processing research proposals keeping in view the faculty engagement in teaching, and capacity development programmes, etc. (i.e. to enable individual faculty to plan his/her time on task) shall be decided and disseminated to the faculty well in time.
- 3.3 NIEPA shall not exclude the possibility of submitting and processing research proposals at any point of time in a given financial year. However, it would be better to follow a front loading strategy in developing and submitting research proposals by the faculty, i.e. most research proposals shall be developed in the first quarter of the financial year. However, this policy shall not apply for NIEPA sponsored research.
- 3.4 Relevant guidelines and generally accepted formats/templates for developing and submitting research proposals shall be developed by the Project Management Unit (PMU) following a consultative process. The same shall be applicable for promoting NIEPA sponsored research.
- 3.5 The PMU shall be responsible for managing in-house as well as sponsored research at NIEPA right from submission of the research proposal to review, approval, notification, implementation, monitoring progress and closure of the research project/study with submission of the final research report.
- 3.6 NIEPA shall develop commonly accepted criteria for evaluating in-house as well as NIEPA sponsored research proposals, focusing on rationale, specification of research questions, research design, data and analysis plan, budget estimates and expected findings/deliverables. The faculty/external agencies seeking funding support from NIEPA shall be made aware of evaluation criteria for processing the research proposal, which shall help them firm up their research proposals right from the very development stage.
- 3.7 Project staff recruitment process shall be institutionalized where the concerned Department and the Project Investigator shall have a larger say in the selection process.

- 3.8 Copy rights/patents of innovative ideas and developmental research at NIEPA producing new educational planning and management techniques, tools and methodologies, etc. shall be ensured by NIEPA.

4. Development of Research Capacity

- 4.1 NIEPA shall develop rules and regulations guiding research at NIEPA, which shall contribute towards creating an enabling environment for promoting research. It is better to have these institutional arrangements in the form of by-laws, guidelines, monitoring frameworks, dissemination/ publication policies, etc. NIEPA shall not only help institutionalize research but also make management of research at NIEPA transparent, accountable and effective.
- 4.2 Capacity development activities for faculty, including skill-oriented research workshops on specific research methods, data processing skills, training in the use of software like SPSS, STATA, GIS, research design, quantitative modelling skills, etc. shall be a regular feature at NIEPA and find a place in its Calendar of Activities.
- 4.3 Besides, individual faculty members shall be encouraged to attend research related capacity development programmes and courses organized by national and international organizations/universities. As far as possible, NIEPA shall sponsor their participation in such professional development programmes as per its rules.

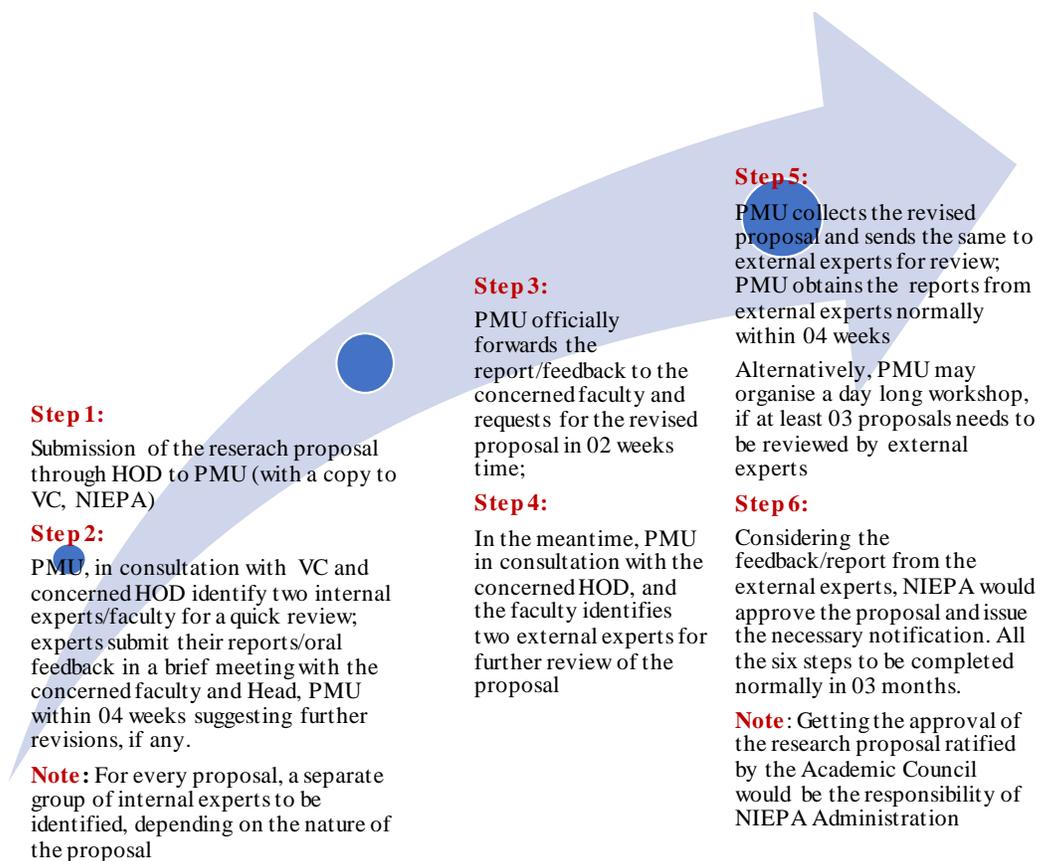
5. Medium Term Priority Areas of Research at NIEPA

- 5.1 While research at NIEPA shall focus on educational planning and management related areas, each Department shall go for identifying a manageable number of priority areas for research, including fundamental and large scale collaborative and longitudinal studies.
- 5.2 The experiences of Departments' engagements in their core areas of work and various education development programmes along with the feedback received from the Departmental Advisory Committee Meetings shall be considered in identifying the key areas of research. Each Department shall have its own research perspective. While doing so, individual faculty interests and specialization shall be taken into consideration.
- 5.3 At the beginning of every medium term planning cycle of NIEPA, research workshops considering the research perspectives of individual Departments shall be undertaken to articulate NIEPA's research agenda.

- 5.4 In the current medium-term period (2020-2025), NIEPA shall prioritize the following broad thematic areas for undertaking research and innovative interventions:
- (i) ICT in Planning and Management of Education, including Teacher Management and Professional Development;
 - (ii) Managing Diversity in Education and Quality of Learning Outcomes;
 - (iii) Educational Governance, including Managing for Results; and
 - (iv) Equity and Inclusion in Education.
- 5.5 Given the broad thematic areas identified, each Department shall identify and prioritize 2-3 sub-themes for developing its medium-term research perspective. Once developed, the research plan of each Department shall be placed before the Departmental Advisory Committee for consideration and approval.
- 5.6 Sponsored research by the MHRD and other national and international organizations, if any, shall also be considered by each Department while developing its medium-term/annual plan for implementing its research programme.

6. Institutional arrangements for streamlining research approval, monitoring and Closure procedures

- 6.1 The screening and approval procedures of research proposals, in-house as well as sponsored shall be streamlined by formulating appropriate norms, standards and procedures. It shall include the maximum timeline (in months) to be taken by NIEPA to process research proposals following a transparent method of evaluation of research proposals and allocation of research studies to individual faculty and external agencies.
- 6.2 Once an in-house full-fledged research proposal is submitted, normally three months shall be taken to process and sanction the proposal. This period would take care of the revisions to be carried out in the proposal on the basis of comments from internal and external experts and the administrative procedures to be followed to sanction a research proposal.
- 6.3 Similarly, NIEPA shall take around three months to process research proposals received from external agencies/individuals.
- 6.4 NIEPA while processing the research proposals, both in-house and sponsored, shall adopt the following procedures not only to reduce the time currently taken to approve a research proposal but also to ensure transparency in the allocation of research studies (see Figure 1). The PMU shall take full responsibility for processing in-house as well as NIEPA sponsored research proposals.



Step 1:

Submission of the research proposal through HOD to PMU (with a copy to VC, NIEPA)

Step 2:

PMU, in consultation with VC and concerned HOD identify two internal experts/faculty for a quick review; experts submit their reports/oral feedback in a brief meeting with the concerned faculty and Head, PMU within 04 weeks suggesting further revisions, if any.

Note: For every proposal, a separate group of internal experts to be identified, depending on the nature of the proposal

Step 3:

PMU officially forwards the report/feedback to the concerned faculty and requests for the revised proposal in 02 weeks time;

Step 4:

In the meantime, PMU in consultation with the concerned HOD, and the faculty identifies two external experts for further review of the proposal

Step 5:

PMU collects the revised proposal and sends the same to external experts for review; PMU obtains the reports from external experts normally within 04 weeks

Alternatively, PMU may organise a day long workshop, if at least 03 proposals need to be reviewed by external experts

Step 6:

Considering the feedback/report from the external experts, NIEPA would approve the proposal and issue the necessary notification. All the six steps to be completed normally in 03 months.

Note: Getting the approval of the research proposal ratified by the Academic Council would be the responsibility of NIEPA Administration

- 6.5 About two weeks shall be given for revising the proposals on the basis of comments and suggestions received from the external experts or made in the research workshop. Further, around two weeks from the date of receiving the revised research proposal (on the basis of external experts' comments/comments in the workshop) shall be sufficient to sanction a research proposal.
- 6.6 NIEPA shall decide the starting and finish time of approved research studies and closely monitor the duration of implementation of these studies. The date of issue of notification sanctioning the research study with budgetary provisions shall be considered the starting date of the research study subject to appointment of related project staff within a month from the date of notification.
- 6.7 The finish date of the study shall be the starting date plus the study duration. However, extension of the project duration can be sought with genuine reasons, including any delay in appointing the research staff.
- 6.8 Ordinarily, no extension shall be given to a sanctioned project. In other words, efforts shall be made to complete the project within the approved project duration. If it is absolutely unavoidable, any delay in the completion of the research study shall be officially informed and approval from competent authority stating the compelling circumstances for extension of the project duration.

- 6.9 A framework for monitoring progress in the implementation of research at NIEPA and reporting/feedback system for the same shall be developed. Individual Departments shall make available quarterly progress report on research to the PMU, which in turn shall compile the same and report to concern authorities. The feedback on the monitoring report shall also be communicated to individual Departments by the PMU.
- 6.10 The project/research study shall be officially closed after its report is presented in a faculty meeting/research workshop/NIEPA Colloquium and the revised final report is submitted to VC, with a copy to Registrar and PMU.
- 6.11 The PMU shall ensure the closure of the research study by coordinating with the concerned faculty/Principal Investigator for sharing of the research findings in a faculty meeting/research workshop/NIEPA Colloquium, and reviewing the final research report on the basis of comments and suggestions received in the faculty meeting/research workshop/NIEPA Colloquium. A quality assurance mechanism for ensuring minimum standard in the research report shall be developed by the PMU following a participatory method.
- 6.12 The PMU shall provide necessary support in terms of making research staff available in time and organizing research review and sharing workshops, capacity development workshops, etc. to facilitate research at NIEPA.
- 6.13 A Project Management Information System (PMIS) shall be put in place to build a database on research at NIEPA as well as to facilitate effective management of research studies.
- 6.14 The accounts of individual research studies shall be kept separately. At the end of the research project/study, its accounts details shall form part of the PMIS.

7. Dissemination of NIEPA Research

- 7.1 All in-house as well as sponsored research shall result in some sort of publications./monographs. NIEPA shall take appropriate measures to facilitate dissemination of research, including publications, uploading of the final research report in NIEPA website, development of training materials on the basis of research studies, wherever appropriate.
- 7.2 As far as possible, outputs of a research study shall be diversified in the form of books/monographs, policy briefs, articles in journals and occasional papers.
- 7.3 Appropriate editorial and related services shall be made available to faculty for finalizing research reports/publications.
- 7.4 NIEPA shall organize national and international research seminars to share and disseminate research in specific thematic areas.
- 7.5 E-dissemination strategies, including uploading of research reports and publications at NIEPA website shall be developed.