

DARE-RC Call for Applications-Cycle 4

Frequently Asked Questions-FAQ

Q1: I am an Assistant Professor. Am I eligible to apply on my own or with other individuals?

Ans: No. Individuals are not eligible to apply. Only institutions/organisations with demonstrated experience in high-quality education or social science research may submit applications.

Q2: How can an applicant organisation apply for the DARE-RC research grants?

Ans: Applicant organisations must submit a complete application which should include:

- **Proposal document** – using the template provided for either research study or scoping paper/evidence synthesis "[DARE-RC Research Proposal Template and Guidelines](#)" and "[DARE-RC Scoping Paper/Evidence Synthesis Template and Guidelines](#)".
- **Financial Proposal** - using the financial template, "[DARE-RC Financial Proposal Template and Guidelines](#)".
- **All supporting documents listed in section 7 of the Call for Applications-Cycle 4 document.**

All documents must be submitted via email grants@rcdare.org

Q3: Are applicant organisations required to be registered in Pakistan?

Ans: No, there is no such restriction under Cycle 4 of the DARE-RC research grants.

Q4: Can an organisation apply for both a Research Study and a Scoping Paper/Evidence Synthesis under the DARE-RC Cycle 4?

Ans: Yes, an organisation may apply for both, provided it submits *separate* applications that independently meet all eligibility, thematic, and technical requirements. Each submission will be evaluated on its own merits.

Q5: Are there specific templates and instructions for submitting the proposal for Research Study and Scoping Paper/evidence synthesis?

Ans: Yes. There are two different templates with specific instructions and guidelines for Research Study and Scoping paper/Evidence Synthesis "[DARE-RC Research Proposal Template and Guidelines](#)" and "[DARE-RC Scoping Paper/Evidence Synthesis Template and Guidelines](#)".

Q6: How many applications can an applicant organisation submit in this Call for Applications?

Ans: Lead applicant organisations are welcome to submit more than one proposal. However, should multiple proposals be shortlisted, the lead applicant organisation will have to explain overlaps between research teams (if any) and justify their ability to successfully manage more than one research grant. DARE-RC will keep the above in consideration at the time of awarding of grants.

Q7: Who will submit the application — the lead applicant organisation, the lead researcher, or the ORIC department?

Ans: The submission of application and the compulsory supporting documentation shall be made by the lead applicant organisation.

Q8: What supporting documents must be accompanied with the Research Proposal or Evidence Synthesis?

Ans: In addition to the submission of the research proposal and financial proposal, applicant organisations are required to submit the following documents with their applications:

1. Basic profile of the organisation focusing on completed and ongoing relevant research projects and other activities including the details like funding institution, research study area, geographical area, total budget etc. This is to be no longer than five pages.
2. Copy of Valid Registration Certificate (for private organisations) or a copy of Byelaws or relevant law, act or other document under which a public sector organisation is registered (for public sector organisations).
3. Complete auditor's report (including audited financial statements) for the years 2023 and 2024 (applicable to both public and private sector organisations).
4. In cases where public sector organisations do not have the above-mentioned audited financial statements and auditor's reports, they may submit any two audit reports issued by the relevant office of the Auditor General of Pakistan/or the relevant authority between 2022 and 2025.
5. Tax registration certificate.
6. Links to/submission of at least two recent peer-reviewed publications relevant to the priority areas and research topics given above: these publications can be authored by any of the key members of the research team.
7. CVs (not more than two-pages each) of core research team (including Lead Investigator/Researcher and co-investigators) - and list of publications of the Lead Investigator/Researcher and co-investigators demonstrating experience of leading and conducting high-quality research in education/social sciences.
8. A confirmation on the applicant organisation's letterhead, signed by the competent authority of the applicant organisation, stating that it will obtain a No Objection Certificate

(NOC) for conducting field data collection under the DARE-RC grant.

9. A confirmation on applicant organisation's letterhead, signed by the competent authority of the applicant organisation stating, "that the applicant organisation is not bankrupt or currently involved in any litigation related to bankruptcy".
10. A confirmation on applicant organisation's letterhead, signed by the competent authority of the applicant organisation stating, "that the applicant organisation is not suspended, or debarred, or otherwise identified as ineligible by FCDO, OPM, or any other organisation".

Q9: What is the nature or type of the Research studies and Scoping Papers/Evidence Synthesis?

Ans: Research grants are competitive, based on pre-defined eligibility criteria and a deadline-driven solicitation process. Only the best eligible applications submitted within the deadline will be considered. Research studies and scoping papers/evidence synthesis topics must be selected from the topics provided under Annex 1 and 2 in the [Call for Applications – Cycle 4 document](#).

Q10: In which geographical areas will the research take place in?

Ans. Research may be carried out in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab, Islamabad Capital Territory and Gilgit Baltistan.

Q11: What is the time period for the implementation of a Research Study and Scoping Papers/Evidence Synthesis?

Ans: The call invites research proposals for 06-08 months, and Scoping Papers/Evidence Synthesis for 04-06 months; covering the full research cycle and dissemination of findings.

Q12: What is the budgetary range and timeline for DARE-RC grants?

Ans: There are separate ranges for Research Studies and Scoping papers/Evidence Synthesis.

Research Studies

- PKR 18-25 million

Scoping papers/evidence synthesis:

- PKR 08-11 million

Q13: What is the submission deadline (date and time) for submitting the Research Proposals or Scoping Papers/Evidence synthesis?

Ans: The deadline for submitting of application is **17th December 2025, 11:59 PM (PST)**.

Q14: What is the last date for submission of queries from the applicant organisations related to Cycle 4?

Ans: The deadline for submitting queries is **Friday 12th December 2025 (11:59pm PST)**; to be sent to info@rcdare.org. Any queries received after this deadline will not be responded to.

Q15: Are there specific areas/topics in education that DARE-RC will consider for Cycle 4 grants?

Ans: Yes. DARE-RC has identified research priority areas and topics for the Research Studies and Scoping Papers/Evidence Synthesis "[Overview-of-existing-DARE-RC studies](#)", which are explained in the [Call for Applications Cycle-4](#) under Annex 1 and Annex 2.

Q16: Is there a template for the budget? Are applicant organisations expected to submit an estimated lump-sum budget or a full detailed budget?

Ans: Yes, there is a Financial Proposal template including budget guidelines "[DARE-RC Financial Proposal Template and Guidelines](#)". Applicant organisations are to ensure that their budget and research design and timelines align. The budget must be in accordance with the budget guidelines mentioned in the Financial Proposal template.

Q17: Where can the applicant organisations obtain the ethical approval certificate, and are there specific institutions mentioned?

Ans: Ethical approval may be obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of HEC-recognised institutions in Pakistan or equivalent national or international institutions.

Q18: Can an applicant organisation collaborate with a UK university or other international experts?

Ans: Yes. International collaboration is welcome.

Q19: Can universities collaborate with government departments?

Ans: Yes. collaborations between academia and public sector organisations are encouraged.

Q20: If an organisation is collaborating with another institution, who must submit the application and supporting documents?

Ans: All submissions must be made by the lead applicant organisation.

Q21: Can the Lead Researcher/Principal Investigator be an international expert?

Ans: Yes. An international expert may serve as the Lead Researcher/PI if they meet the eligibility criteria

Q22: What is the solicitation process for the DARE-RC grants Cycle 4?

Ans: Applications for funding will be assessed through a single-stage application process i.e. "Submission of Research/Scoping Paper/Evidence Synthesis and Financial Proposal" as outlined in section 6 "Solicitation Process" of the Call for Applications-Cycle 4.

Q23: What overarching criteria will be used to assess applications under Cycle 4?

The following overarching criteria will be applied in the selection process:

- a. **Clear Engagement with Existing National and International Evidence:** Priority will be given to proposals that identify, engage with and build upon existing national and international evidence, and clearly situate their ideas within existing body of knowledge. The proposals will need to explicitly outline how they would advance the evidence base and contribute to the global stock of knowledge.
- b. **Policy Relevance and Demand:** Priority will be given to the proposals which demonstrate alignment with existing policy needs and potentials for impactful policy uptake.
- c. **Potential to Fill Critical Evidence Gaps:** Topics addressing significant evidence gaps, will be prioritised. Studies will be selected for their potential to enhance policy formulation and implementation significantly.
- d. **Methodological rigour:** The proposal presents research-design that reflects methodological rigour throughout the conduct of the study.
- e. **Feasibility and Timeliness:** Consideration will be given to the practicality of conducting the research within the available timeframe, with special attention to the timely accessibility of requisite data, ease of implementation, and realistic timelines for completion.
- f. **Cost-effectiveness:** Studies will be evaluated in relation to their expected cost and resource implications. Studies that can deliver robust, actionable insights at reasonable costs will be prioritised.

Q24: What is the evaluation process for applications?

- a. Ans: Complete applications will be evaluated by DARE-RC's technical review and fund management teams in accordance with the "[evaluation criteria](#)".

The decision of DARE-RC will be considered final keeping in mind evaluation scores and the overall DARE-RC research portfolio.

Q25: How will applicant organisations be notified of the proposal review outcome?

Ans: Successful applicant organisations will be contacted by DARE-RC with instructions for next steps.

Q26: If an organisation submits multiple competitive proposals, is there a risk of disqualification?

Ans: No, organisations may lead multiple applications. However, the organisation must justify its capacity to manage multiple grants. DARE-RC will consider this during the grant award process.

Q27: How will conflict of interest be handled in the application process?

Ans: All applicant organisations, Lead Researchers, and Co-Lead Researchers will be required to submit a **Disclosure form** (separately available for each [Disclosure form](#), [Lead Investigator](#) and [Co-Investigators](#)). to help determine whether any conflicts of interest may exist in their application. The answers to these questions will be treated confidentially by the DARE-RC directorate and will not be shared with reviewers. Answers to these questions will not usually disqualify a proposal but may require the need to take additional actions to mitigate potential conflicts.

Q28: Will DARE-RC be organising a Q&A session before the application deadline?

Ans: DARE-RC will be holding an online Q&A session on **Friday 05th December 2025 (at 3:00pm Pakistan Standard Time-PST)**. Meeting link details for this session will be available on the DARE-RC website.

Applicant organisations are advised to check the DARE-RC website (www.darerc.com.pk) regularly to ensure they do not miss any updates.

Q29: Under what circumstances will an applicant organisation be disqualified?

Ans: Failure to meet any eligibility condition or failure to submit the proposal with required documents.

If found involved in misrepresentation, misdeclaration, unfair practices, influencing the process, concealing information, collusion, or undeclared conflict of interest at any stage. Such organisations may be blacklisted, and FCDO will be notified.

Q30: Who is the Principal Investigator (PI)?

Ans: The PI or Lead Researcher is the person leading and responsible for the proposed research.

Q31: Should the proposal be submitted through the university, and must all documents be submitted at this stage?

Ans: Applications must be submitted by the lead applicant organisation. All required supporting documents must be submitted to grants@rcdare.org at this stage.

Q32: What is the full timeline for awarding grants?

Ans: The entire process—from submission of proposal to approval and due diligence—may take at least 3 months after the submission deadline.

Q33: What if the institution has no prior research experience in education but the research team does?

Ans: The team's experience will be considered, but the organisation must still meet all eligibility requirements and submit the required documentation.

Q34: What are the intellectual property rights for research outputs?

Ans: Any project specific deliverables and Project Specific Intellectual Property Rights (written documents, primary data collected, audio-visual materials, etc.) created under the research project shall be owned by the grantee. However the grantee is to grant OPM a perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, assignable, royalty-free licence to use, sub-license and/or commercially exploit any Project Specific IPRs.

Research outputs produced under the DARE-RC call must be aligned to the FCDO's "Research Open and Enhanced Access Policy"¹.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-research-open-and-enhanced-access-policy>

Researchers are to acknowledge FCDO funding in the research project final outputs by stating that "This research product has been funded with UK International Development from the UK government under the DARE-RC programme".

Q35: Does a sole proprietorship with relevant expertise qualify?

Ans: Yes, if it is legally registered in accordance with the relevant laws of the country.

Q36: How should applicant organisations seek clarification if they have any queries regarding Cycle 4?

Ans: A comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) is available on our webpage. Applicant organisations may also send their queries to info@rcdare.org. The deadline for query submission is **Friday 12th December 2025, 11.59 PM (PST)**.