URC GUIDELINES TO PROMOTE RESEARCH RELATED TO COVID-19

A. Funding

1. The University shall provide funds through the University Research Council (URC) to promote research related to Covid-19.

2. Because of the ongoing nature of the pandemic, the URC shall accept research proposals from faculty members, professionals, and staff of the Ateneo de Manila University on a continuous basis, without being bound by the semestral cycle in accepting research grant applications. These proposals are expected to have a budget of at most ₱500,000, although in exceptional cases a budget in excess of this amount may be considered if the expenses are fully justified.

3. Because of the University's limited research funds, interested members of the University community are encouraged to identify Philippine government, domestic private sector, and overseas funding opportunities for research related to Covid-19. The blending of external funds with internal grants is preferred.

4. Interested members of the University community are encouraged to collaborate with overseas and other local researchers in developing research projects and accessing foreign funds for Covid-19 research.

5. Because proposals are accepted on an off-cycle basis, the provision of research loads to investigators cannot be guaranteed as administratively it may take a lead time of at least one semester before a research load can be applied.

B. Priority Areas

1. The call for proposals issued by the URC on 21 April 2020 did not specify research priority areas. However, it is advisable that priority areas be identified so that, given the plethora of research topics, the Ateneo de Manila University can strengthen its contributions in specific areas of study related to Covid-19. We also recognize that we cannot pursue some types of medical and nonmedical research; hence, we must identify priority areas that are feasible and needful. In general, studies that help mitigate the pandemic are preferred.

2. The first research priority area concerns translational research. A public health emergency such as the current pandemic requires immediate responses, but the process of developing treatments and cures for Covid-19 is complex, protracted, and funding-intensive. In this context, translational science is important as it focuses on moving ("translating") laboratory findings into medical practice and treatments to
improve health and well-being. Translational research can also produce inputs to public policy. See the US National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (https://ncats.nih.gov/covid19-translational-approach).


4. A third research priority area consists of systematic reviews and meta-analysis. These studies do not require original data collection. Nonetheless, systematic review articles on the new coronavirus and Covid-19, which may span many scientific areas, can provide foundational knowledge. See, for example, the research registry of the American Society for Microbiology and its research resources: https://asm.org/COVID/COVID-19-Research-Registry/General-Reviews.

5. A fourth research priority area covers governance issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Research on past epidemics indicate that governance and leadership play critical roles in the outcome of an epidemic, affecting the capacity of a society for recovery. (See, e.g., Linda Newson, A historical-ecological perspective on epidemic disease, in *Advances in Historical Ecology*, ed. W. Balée, 42–63, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.) To the extent possible, research on governance and leadership should be pursued using a comparative perspective.

6. A fifth research priority area concerns the social and cultural perspectives and actions of individuals, groups, and communities in response to the pandemic. In what ways do these social and cultural factors enhance or hamper the mitigation of the pandemic and society’s ability to recover from it? To the extent possible, research on the social and cultural concomitants of the pandemic should be pursued using a comparative perspective.

7. A sixth research priority area hews closely to the mission of the Ateneo de Manila University: the ramifications of Covid-19 on education at all levels and how students, teachers, and educational institutions are transitioning to online education, especially in view of the digital divide in society.

8. To summarize, the priority areas for the off-cycle call for Covid-19 research proposals are as follows:
   a. Translational research
   b. Epidemiological studies
   c. Systematic reviews and meta-analysis
   d. Leadership and governance
   e. Social and cultural concomitants
   f. Online education
9. Important research related to Covid-19 that do not fall within these priority areas need not be submitted during the off-cycle call but can be submitted during the regular cycle of the URC’s call for proposals.

C. Research Collaboration

1. Researchers interested in Covid-19 research are enjoined to engage in research collaboration with scholars from other schools within the Ateneo de Manila University and from other universities and research institutes.

2. The University shall draw up a roster of faculty members, medical practitioners, professionals, and other staff members with research interests in Covid-19. A regular forum for this pool of researchers can be organized to exchange research insights and findings and possibly generate new research ideas.

3. All Covid-19 research shall be guided by the URC Research Guidelines During the Covid-19 Pandemic.

D. Publications and Research Dissemination

1. If supported by University funds, research on Covid-19 should be submitted to the appropriate journals for publication. Even when no University funds are directly involved in a research project, it is advisable that research findings are published.

2. The results of Covid-19 research by members of the University community shall be uploaded in a Covid-19 registry in Archium Ateneo, the University's institutional repository, to contribute to the general pool of knowledge about the current epidemic.

3. Ongoing studies related to Covid-19 that have yet to produce publications are enjoined to upload abstracts of their research in the Covid-19 registry in Archium Ateneo. This may avoid duplication of existing studies or result in research collaboration.

4. Researchers are also encouraged to share their findings in the registry or Local Evidence Database of the Department of Health (https://hpdpb.doh.gov.ph/health-research-division/doh-covid-19-evidence-database/).

5. Once a research project has found substantive findings or when a research project concludes, researchers are encouraged to give talks and seminars online. These webinars shall be video-recorded and uploaded to the Internet, with links to these webinars aggregated in the Covid-19 registry in Archium Ateneo.