International Organization for Standardization
Organisation internationale de normalisation
Международная организация по стандартизации

ISO Research Grant 2021

Call for research proposals

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1. About the ISO Research Grant

The ISO Research Grant is awarded annually to one postgraduate student (Masters, PhD or post-doc) to conduct a research study related to a theme proposed by ISO. The grant amount is 25,000 CHF. A different theme is proposed each year, but the broad focus is on evaluating the impacts of international standards.

Applicants submit a research proposal related to the year's theme. This proposal can be for a research project related to the researcher's academic work. However, it shall be for an original piece of work and shall not have been previously published. ISO recognizes the right of the researcher to later produce a publication on the basis of the scientific results of the research submitted to ISO, provided that this does not interfere with the right of ISO to use the final output of the research for its own purposes, including for marketing and promotional activities (in any media).

In particular, ISO will be granted with a worldwide, royalty-free, perpetual, non-exclusive right and license to use, copy, publish, modify, create derivative works therefrom, distribute or make available the final output or translations of it, for any of its own purposes, provided that appropriate credits to the author are given. For example, the final output of the research would be used by the ISO/CS Research and Innovation unit to create materials for dissemination to the attention of ISO members (the format of these materials will depend on the nature of the study). The researcher will also provide ISO with all data used in the project. Access provisions will be negotiated depending on data sources and applicable law, but ISO must have access to all data included in the final report, including data collected by the researcher directly.

The awarding of the grant does not create any employer-employee relationship with ISO. The researcher or their employing institution will be responsible for paying all the taxes applicable to the fees they will receive. Further details may be defined in a separate contractual arrangement, which will govern the relationship with the selected researcher.

2. Theme 2021

The 2021 theme for the ISO Research Grant is **"International Standards and the Sustainable Development Goals"**. With 10 years left to go for the United Nations to achieve its 17 SDGs, ISO would like to further investigate how the use of international standards can contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Applicants should link their proposed work to specific SDG targets and concrete outcomes that represent progress toward the Goals. The SDG Indicators Framework (available here) may offer some guidance on measures and potentially relevant data sources.

ISO has mapped a number of its standards to the SDGs, identifying those that our experts feel make the most significant contribution. However, this mapping is based on theoretical links between the subjects of the standards and the SDG targets; how the standards are meant to be used, their presumed effects and the perceptions of experts. We would like to explore whether/how these links can be backed up with evidence.

With more than 22,000 ISO standards and 17 SDGs to choose from, the possibilities on this theme are endless. Take a look at our brochure and website to get inspired and develop a research proposal!

3. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the research grant, the applicant(s)* must be:
- Currently enrolled in postgraduate studies or a post-doc at an institution of higher education or public research organization;
- Able to demonstrate the relevance of standardization to their field of study;
- Proficient in English (the study shall be written in English).

*a joint proposal can be made by more than one person, as long as all applicants fit the above criteria. In the case of joint proposals, only one grant will be awarded.

4. Timeline

Milestone/steps	Date
Call for research proposals launched	04 February 2021
Deadline to submit research proposals	**31 May 2021 23:00 (UTC)**
Expected evaluation of proposals (including references)	June-July 2021

Announcement of winning proposal	31 August 2021 (at the latest)
Deadline for submission of the final research to ISO	31 August 2022

5. Proposal elements and structure

Your proposal for the ISO Research Grant must contain three elements:
1. Letter of motivation – Include, for example, your reasons for applying, your inspiration for the proposed study, why you are qualified to carry out this study and how you expect to benefit from it.
2. CV with referees
3. Research proposal – Following the structure outlined in the table below.

Section	Guidance on content
Title	Provide a short, concise title that conveys what your research is about.
Abstract	Describe the topic and aims of the study. Provide a summary of who will be involved in the research, the methods, the timeframe and a statement explaining relevance of the research.
Introduction	Explain why you chose this topic, how your proposed research is relevant to the theme and how it contributes to the body of knowledge on impact of standards (significance to the research field).
Research question(s)	What is the question you are trying to answer? The purpose of this research; why it needs to be done.
Literature review	Give a brief summary of relevant existing research related to the topic (including potential gaps or limitations) and indication of potential sources. Demonstrate your understanding of the topic and its wider context.
Methodology	What is the systematic approach you will use to solve your research problem?
Research design and methods	Provide detail about research participants, sources of data and methods of data collection, methods for data analysis and synthesis, limitations of the study.
Ethics	Are there any ethical concerns associated with your research proposal?
Communication of results	How will your research findings be shared? What is / are the foreseen research products?
Timeline	Estimate how long each task will take and show how you will complete your study in the given timeframe.
Budget	Indicate how the funds from the research grant will be allocated.
References	List of references used when writing the proposal.

6. How to apply

To apply for the ISO Research Grant, send your letter of motivation, CV and research proposal by email to research@iso.org before the deadline of 23:00 (UTC) on 31 May 2021.

7. Selection criteria

The following selection criteria will be taken into account in selecting the grant winner.

Threshold criteria – proposals not meeting these criteria will not be given further consideration:

Domain	Criteria
Topic and project planning	Project topic is clearly relevant to the theme – topic clearly identifies a link between standards (ideally, a specific standard/s) and one or more SDG goals/targets.
	Project budget is clear and detailed
Applicant background and support	Applicant's academic/professional background is relevant to the topic and proposed methodology
	Applicant has the support of supervisors/relevant referees

Evaluation criteria – proposals meeting the threshold criteria will be assessed as follows:

Domain	Criteria	Weight
Quality of the project proposal	Soundness of the proposed methodology (including sufficient planning for access to data, outline of intended analytic approach, etc).	30%
	Originality/novelty of the topic and importance of the results to the existing body of research	15%
	Utility of intended project outputs (eg. Full report, summaries, briefing points, etc).	5%
	Written communication skills: clarity of message, structure and logical flow of proposal	20%
	Budget outline: proposed budget represents effective planning and expenditure. Budget should be transparent, detailed and demonstrate value for money.	10%
Experience and expertise	Breadth and depth of experience and expertise in the proposed subject area: quality and relevance of previous publications and academic background	12%
Motivation	Motivation expressed by the researcher: stated reasons for applying, inspiration for the proposed study, expected benefits for the student	8%

ISO will not, except at its own discretion, provide information about the evaluation process, or feedback on individual submissions.

8. ISO Central Secretariat (ISO/CS) involvement

The ISO/CS Research and Innovation unit is responsible for all aspects related to management and administration of the award. The researcher will be expected to keep the ISO/CS Research and Innovation unit informed about the progress of the study (for example, by providing regular progress updates. A schedule of updates will be agreed on with the researcher as appropriate for the project plan).

The ISO/CS R&I unit will provide guidance and support to the researcher in completion of the study as far as possible (for example, by commenting on outlines/drafts, providing contacts within ISO members or ISO-related data).

9. Legal Disclaimer

By responding to this ISO research grant proposal, applicants agree that ISO reserves the right to withdraw it for any reason and, shall not in any way be responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of the application.

10. Contact

Please contact research@iso.org if you have any questions or require further information about the ISO Research Grant.