

Job Description: Director of Research

About the Al Qasimi Foundation

The Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research (AQF) is a leading philanthropic organization based in Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates. The Foundation supports the social, cultural, and economic development of RAK and the wider UAE through research, policy engagement, capacity development, and community programming.

Position Overview

The **Director of Research** serves as the Foundation's principal research leader and is responsible for shaping and advancing the Foundation's research vision, strategy, and impact agenda. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Director provides intellectual, strategic, and operational leadership to ensure the Foundation produces high-quality, policy-relevant research that informs decision-making, contributes to knowledge generation, and supports the social, economic, educational, and community development of Ras Al Khaimah, the UAE, and the wider region.

The Director leads the development and execution of a comprehensive research portfolio, overseeing research design, implementation, quality assurance, publication, dissemination, and stakeholder engagement activities. The role is responsible for fostering a culture of research excellence, innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning while ensuring that all research activities meet the highest standards of rigor, integrity, and ethical practice.

The Director plays a critical role in strengthening the Foundation's position as a leading regional policy research institution, thought leadership, external engagement, and the development of impactful research initiatives. Working closely with government entities, academic institutions, international organizations, philanthropic organizations, and community stakeholders, the Director ensures that research outputs contribute meaningfully to public policy, practice, and community development.

The successful candidate will be an accomplished research leader with extensive experience in applied research, public policy, education, social sciences, or a related discipline, combined with a demonstrated track record of leading multidisciplinary teams, managing complex research portfolios, attracting research funding, and translating research into measurable social impact.

Key Responsibilities

Research Strategy, Leadership & Organizational Impact (30%)

- Develop and implement the Foundation's research strategy, priorities, and annual research agenda in alignment with organizational objectives.
- Provide strategic, intellectual, and methodological leadership across all research initiatives.

- Identify emerging policy issues, research opportunities, and areas of strategic relevance to the Foundation.
- Ensure research activities contribute to evidence-informed decision-making and organizational impact.
- Lead departmental planning, performance management, resource allocation, and operational effectiveness.

Research Excellence, Publications & Thought Leadership (25%)

- Oversee the development and publication of high-quality research papers, policy briefs, reports, journals, and knowledge products.
- Promote a culture of research excellence and innovation across the Foundation.
- Strengthening the Foundation's reputation through thought leadership, publications, speaking engagements, and research dissemination activities.
- Ensure research findings are translated into practical insights for policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders.
- Serve as Co-Editor of the Gulf Education and Social Policy Review and support its strategic development and academic quality.

People Leadership & Research Capacity Development (20%)

- Lead, mentor, and develop a high-performing research team.
- Foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, innovation, and continuous professional development.
- Support succession planning and talent development within the Research Department.
- Promote a culture of accountability, excellence, and continuous improvement.
- Oversee the supervision and development of research associates, fellows, interns, and visiting scholars.

Strategic Partnerships, Policy Engagement & External Relations (15%)

- Establish and strengthen partnerships with government entities, universities, think tanks, research institutions, international organizations, and philanthropic partners.
- Represent the Foundation at local, regional, and international forums, conferences, and stakeholder engagements.
- Identify opportunities for collaborative research, external funding, grants, and strategic initiatives.
- Build productive relationships that enhance the Foundation's influence, visibility, and impact.
- Support policy dialogue and knowledge exchange initiatives that advance the Foundation's mission.

Research Governance, Quality Assurance & Ethics (10%)

- Establish and maintain robust research governance, quality assurance, and ethical review processes.
- Ensure compliance with research standards, policies, and ethical requirements.

- Monitor research quality, project performance, and departmental outcomes.
- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, learning, and impact assessment practices.
- Promote transparency, integrity, and accountability in all research activities.

Main Duties

- Lead the design, implementation, and management of research projects and initiatives.
- Develop research proposals, concept notes, funding applications, and strategic research plans.
- Oversee qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research activities.
- Review and approve research methodologies, data collection processes, and analytical frameworks.
- Prepare and oversee policy briefs, reports, publications, presentations, and knowledge products.
- Present research findings to stakeholders, policymakers, academic audiences, and community groups.
- Manage departmental budgets and ensure effective allocation of resources.
- Monitor project implementation, timelines, deliverables, and performance indicators.
- Coordinate with internal departments and external partners to support collaborative initiatives.
- Ensure compliance with organizational policies, research ethics, and quality standards.
- Support grant development, proposal costing, and resource planning activities.
- Undertake additional responsibilities as assigned by the Executive Director in support of organizational objectives.

Performance Expectations

- Deliver a high-quality and impactful research portfolio aligned with organizational priorities.
- Produce policy-relevant research outputs that contribute to evidence-based decision-making.
- Maintain high standards of research quality, integrity, and ethical compliance.
- Strengthen national, regional, and international research partnerships.
- Successfully managing departmental resources and budgets.
- Build and sustain a high-performing research team.
- Enhance the Foundation's reputation as a leading research and policy institution.
- Contribute to organizational learning, innovation, and continuous improvement.

Candidate Profile

Qualifications & Experience

- PhD in Education, Economics, Public Policy, Social Sciences, International Development, or a related field.
- Minimum of 7–10 years of progressively responsible experience in research, policy, academia, philanthropy, think tanks, or international development.
- Demonstrated experience leading multidisciplinary research teams and complex research projects.
- Strong track record of publications, policy engagement, and stakeholder collaboration.
- Experience managing research budgets and externally funded projects is highly desirable.
- Experience within the UAE or GCC region is an advantage.

Skills & Competencies

- Research Leadership
- Advanced Research Design and Methodology (Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods)
- Academic and Policy Writing
- Research Publications and Knowledge Dissemination
- Stakeholder and Partnership Management
- Strategic Planning and Organizational Development
- Project and Budget Management
- Research Ethics and Quality Assurance
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
- Presentation and Public Communication
- Documentation and Information Management
- Research Software and Analytical Tools
- Public Relations and Media Engagement

Management Skills

- Ability to lead and develop multidisciplinary teams.
- Strong strategic planning and decision-making capabilities.
- Excellent project and portfolio management skills.
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines effectively.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and relationship management skills.
- Proven ability to lead change and drive organizational performance.

Organizational Fit

- Commitment to evidence-based policy development and research excellence.
- Strong intellectual curiosity and passion for applied research.
- Collaborative leadership style with strong interpersonal skills.
- High standards of integrity, accountability, and professionalism.
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity when engaging with diverse stakeholders.
- Commitment to the Foundation's mission and values.

Compensation & Benefits

- Competitive, tax-free salary.
- Comprehensive health insurance.
- Professional development opportunities.
- Value-driven organizational culture.

Reporting Structure & Team Dynamics

- Reports to: Executive Director.
- Member of: Senior Leadership Team
- Works closely with: Deputy Director, Education & Community Development Department, Scholarship Office, Arts & Culture Department, Administration Department, Communications Team, Finance Team, Government Entities, Universities and Research Institutes, Think Tanks, NGOs and International Organizations
- Manages: Research Department, including Senior Research Associates, Research Associates, Research Fellows, Interns, and Research Support Staff.

Application Requirements

Candidates must provide:

- CV
- Cover Letter
- Selected research publications or writing samples
- Relevant certifications (if applicable)
- References upon request