



The Association of
Accountants and
Financial Professionals
in Business

IMA Research Foundation 2020 Special COVID-19 Call for Research Proposals

The IMA Research Foundation (IRF) is dedicated to funding relevant, thought-provoking research that furthers the knowledge and scope of accounting and financial management globally. To support management accounting-related research in these especially hard financial times, the IRF is pleased to announce a special “COVID-19 call for research proposals” for the 2020-21 academic year. Given the COVID-19-related financial difficulties that many schools are encountering, the IRF hopes to help offset the decreased research and travel budgets many professors are facing.

Topics: Grants will be based on the proposals’ potential to advance the practice of management accounting. Research in the areas described in “Topics of interest” below are especially encouraged, although other topics will be considered. Proposed studies can use basic or applied research methods including analytical, archival, experimental, survey, or case study.

Funding: Accepted grant proposals may be funded up to US\$25,000, to be used at the discretion of the researcher(s). Funded researchers will be required to produce a 3,000-word report suitable for a professional audience as well as related deliverables (such as a webinar describing their research).

To apply: Proposals should meet the “Guidelines for proposal submissions” at the end of this document. Grant applications should be submitted to research@imanet.org.

Deadline: **October 31, 2020; 12 Midnight EST.** Winners to be announced by November 15, 2020.

Topics of interest: While proposals on any topic will be considered, we especially invite grant proposals that address research questions relating to the role of management accounting in revenue management, energy-related decisions, the impact of distributed workforce on management control systems, small business issues, measuring intangible assets, and digital technology solutions.

Revenue management

While cost management and control has been the traditional focus of management accounting, a more holistic approach to increasing organizational profitability is needed as management accountants strive to become business partners. For example, customer profitability analysis should include not only how servicing different client groups drives costs but also how it drives revenues; often the same driver applies to both. Integrating revenue management (RM) principles with cost management practices is essential to maximizing organizational profitability. Potential research topics include how revenue generation differs across organizations, what RM practices are used by management accountants, and how management accountants can help their organizations improve RM.

Energy-related decisions

The world needs more energy but less carbon. The global nature of greenhouse gas emissions as well as increasing climate change provides an important context that management accounting and management control systems (MCS) research should address. This requires improved ways to anticipate and to fulfill new information requirements and to provide guidance in areas such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), carbon capture and utilization (CCU), and carbon trading. It also includes helping organizations of all kinds make energy-related decisions around decarbonizing operations.



Impact of distributed workforce on management control systems

COVID-19 has resulted in a paradigm shift in how organizations globally do work. The implications of the distributed workforce for MCS is enormous. It can affect all parts of the MCS, including cultural, planning, measurement, reward and compensation, and administrative controls. How can management accounting tools and MCS concepts support the focus of a distributed workforce company's resources at all hierarchal levels on the strategic objectives of the company?

Small business issues

The rapid growth in e-commerce is raising new compliance and control issues that need to be addressed quickly, especially for small businesses ill-equipped for these new challenges. For example, how do you budget cash flows for the next 12 months to show ability to pay back small business loans? Banks are understandably concerned about the credit risk from issuing PPP loans and other lending to small business clients. Past credit history is no longer sufficient.

Measuring intangibles

Everyone recognizes the value of intangible assets but often consider them unmeasurable. Examples include governance-related intangibles, such as trust, accountability, and transparency. Trust is the foundation of market-based transactions and economic activity and a key aspect of reputational value and ethics. Further, key performance indicators (KPIs) should measure facets of business activity that are critical to successfully executing strategic objectives. How are companies finding success measuring intangibles? How might they find success?

Digital technology solutions

Advances in established core application capability and emerging digital technologies are elevating the offering of finance and accounting functions across the globe. Data analytics and automation tools have accelerated management accounting value delivery during the pandemic, and advanced analytics and artificial intelligence are expected to have a lasting impact on the future of the profession. How has the pandemic impacted accounting and finance functions' adoption of emerging technology? How might internal controls be shaped to prevent and detect bias in the use of AI for accounting processes?

See "Guidelines for Proposal Submission" on next page.

Questions regarding this call for proposals or other IRF grant programs can be sent to Kip Krumwiede, director of research, at kkrumwiede@imanet.org or by calling +1-201-474-1732.



Guidelines for Proposal Submission

Eligibility of Researcher(s)

The principal researcher must be a full-time faculty member or doctoral student at an accredited college or university or an industry practitioner with appropriate research experience, credentials, and/or certification. Researchers who are not members of IMA® (Institute of Management Accountants) and receive a grant from IRF are expected to join IMA within 60 days of notification of funding.

Required Content for all Submissions

Each proposal should be submitted electronically (PDF or Word format) and must include each of the items listed below:

- 1) Cover letter addressing the value of the research to the management accounting profession and practitioner.
- 2) Abstract with clearly defined research questions and value statement.
- 3) Research proposal primary content, including:
 - a) *Research objectives* with clearly delineated research questions.
 - b) *Research methodology*: field research, survey, experiment, etc.
 - c) *Background* and/or theoretical foundation.
 - d) *Researcher(s) previous experience* in the research area. Although the proposal should stand on its own, examples of relevant work in the area, such as articles or working papers, may be submitted.
 - e) *Potential impact*. A description of how the research may contribute to the management accounting profession, including implications for practice and future research.
 - f) *Research timeline* that includes at least one progress report and due date for each proposed deliverable.
 - g) *Use of human subjects*: If the research proposal involves human subjects, the researcher(s) must provide a written statement of assurance stating that the rights of the human subjects will be protected and that all subjects will provide informed consent. Principal investigators from institutions with an institutional review board or human subject research committee are required to provide a letter of approval from their board. (This letter may be submitted later but must be received before funds are released.)
 - h) *Project deliverables*. Funded researchers are required to produce a 3,000-word report suitable for a professional audience for consideration toward publication in *Strategic Finance* or *Management Accounting Quarterly*, as well as related deliverables. These deliverables may include a full research white paper report, C-suite report, webinar, refereed academic journal article, Statement on Management Accounting (SMA), conference presentation, practice guides, or other resources useful for practitioners in the management accounting profession.
 - i) *Budget* (optional) with appropriate level of detail for research-related expenses. IRF does not fund overhead or fringe benefits.
 - j) *Summary of researcher(s) qualifications* as an appendix containing abbreviated curricula vitae for each of the researchers (10 page maximum).



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About the IMA Research Foundation

The IMA Research Foundation (IRF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, educational organization formed in 1994 as an entity affiliated with IMA. IRF's mission is to assist with the funding, development, and dissemination of timely research that assists accountants and financial professionals in their roles. All research projects funded by IRF are evaluated based on their potential to contribute to the "body of knowledge" available to the members of IMA and the management accounting profession as a whole. For more information about IRF, visit <https://www.imanet.org/educators/research-foundation>.

About IMA

IMA is the association dedicated to empowering accountants and financial professionals in business to become "trusted business advisors" by playing an active role in their organizations' business success. With a network of more than 140,000 professionals worldwide, IMA provides a dynamic forum for professionals to advance their careers through CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification, professional education, networking, and advocacy of the highest ethical and professional standards. For more information about IMA, please visit www.imanet.org.