



The Association of
Accountants and
Financial Professionals
in Business

IMA Research Foundation 2020 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 date, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1,000,000 in research grants to academics and doctoral students. Click below for sample recently IRF-funded whitepapers:

- [Naughty or Nice: Earnings management in the days of corporate watchdogs](#)
- [Sustainability CFO: The CFO of the Future?](#)

The IRF is launching its 2020 Call for Research Proposals. We invite grant proposals that address research questions relating to the role of the CFO and the finance team as it transitions from value stewardship to value creation. Research in the areas described 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.

Up to three (3) proposals received by the Foundation will receive grants of \$10,000, based on their potential to advance the practice of management accounting. Other proposals submitted to the Foundation will be considered for grants of \$5,000 each.

Grant proposal criteria:

- Proposals should meet the appropriate IRF proposal guidelines (excluding budget):
 - For faculty: [Guidelines for submitting research proposals](#)
 - For students: [IMA Doctoral Scholars grant program guidelines](#)
- Researchers will be expected to produce a 3,000-word report for a professional audience.

Deadline for Submission of Proposals: June 1, 2020; 12:00 Midnight EDT. Winners to be announced by June 30, 2020. Topics of Interest Include:

Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A)

FP&A is the most frequently cited “pain point” for accounting and finance professionals. The increasing interconnected global business environment, rapid technological change, and the need to address these and other changes continue to make this a challenging area. Potential research topics include:

- Developing effective skills for FP&A to overcome people, leadership, and process challenges.
 - How can technology, data, and intangible assets be leveraged to deliver more value?
 - How can enhanced managerial costing and revenue modeling be improved to enhance FP&A?
 - What is the role of finance in a sustainable organization? How can finance partner with the rest of the organization to create value?
 - How can the CFO and finance function help the organization build and integrate a sustainable business strategy? What is the level of adoption of integrated value creation?
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- What types of nonfinancial information can be used internally to enable better sustainability decision-making?
- How does a company demonstrate how intangible assets, long-term performance, and value are enhanced by considering sustainable business (ESG) factors?

CSR/ Sustainability

The refocus from issuing conventional financial statements toward holistic leadership over long-term performance and value creation is leading to significant changes to the CFO's role and contribution. An enterprise perspective can bring about insights regarding the information, processes, and milestones that lead to enhanced performance and value. Potential research topics include:

- How can the CFO and finance function lead enterprise-wide integration of sustainable business through corporate governance, strategy, and innovation?
- How do specific sustainable business performance metrics correspond to intangible assets, long-term performance, and value? Key areas include customer relationships, governance, trust, transparency, human capital and sustainable projects.
- How can business organizations apply risk management principles and frameworks (COSO) to assess and report on the financial effects of sustainable business risks, including the effects of climate change?

Digital Transformation

Accounting and Finance is being disrupted by a whole host of new technologies. These have the potential to eliminate many positions and create new ones. Key to the latter is the continued evolution of the role of management accountants from their traditional focus on financial reporting and stewardship to a more complete business partner who enables an organization to enhance performance. Potential research topics include:

- What is the impact of technological change on the role of the finance function? How will it affect/transform the finance organization?
- What are the most important emerging technology (e.g., blockchain, RPA, visualization, advanced analytics) skills for management accountants to possess? What levels of skills do they typically have, what levels will be required in the future, and how can skills gaps be addressed?

Ethics & Corporate Governance

New technologies raise new ethical dilemmas that will be faced by the finance professional. Concurrently, as finance professionals get more involved in the strategic planning process, there is also a greater need for professional skepticism with regard to the inputs and assumptions in that process. The ability to employ critical thinking and ethical judgement will be of increased importance as the role of the management accountant continues to evolve. Potential research topics in this area include:

- How are changing society expectations of the role of business organizations, along with the evolving role of management accountants, affecting the need for finance professionals to assume a leadership role in developing and promoting in an ethics-based culture within their organizations?
- What are the potential ethical pitfalls for finance professionals in a digital environment? What ethical challenges are created through the acquisition, governance and use of data? How can these be addressed?

Please submit applications to research@imanet.org by June 1, 2020. Questions regarding the CFP 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.
