

- FOR FY17 ONLY -

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR AWARDING FACULTY RESEARCH/CREATIVE ACTIVITY GRANTS

Program Overview

Faculty Research/Creative Activity (RCA) Grants provide funds for substantive support of research and creative activities and are intended to advance a faculty member's scholarly activities. They are intended for larger faculty research and creative projects that require more support and time than pilot studies or minigrants.

For purposes of this competition, **research** is defined as "a systematic study directed toward fuller scientific knowledge or understanding of the subject studied."¹ **Creative activity** is defined as the preparation and execution of original works designed to advance artistic accomplishment, principally in art, music, theater, dance, and similar areas.

Time Line

The annual RCA competition is held during the fall semester, and funded proposals are carried out in the in the spring and summer semesters (January – August). The University Research Council (URC) reviews RCA proposals and makes recommendations to the Provost and VPAA. Approximately 5-7 awards will be made each academic year, depending on the quality of applications and availability of funds.

Application Categories

Applications are divided into two categories – (1) Research and (2) Creative Activity – and evaluated based on separate criteria.

Use of Funds

In addition to a 6-week summer salary, funding of up to \$10,000 is allowable to support travel to collect data, to purchase minor equipment, supplies and materials, for hourly student assistant wages, and for specific services (i.e., contract services, sample analysis, translator, etc.). RCA awards are not for the development or evaluation of curricular materials or techniques, or for instructional support. Summer salaries are intended to compensate faculty members while they conduct intensive project activities during a summer term. RCA funds do not support graduate student assistant appointments and should not supplant other funding sources (i.e., department, state, federal).

Eligibility and Conditions

1. Individuals with a full-time, tenure-track academic appointment detailed in SFA policy 8.11 are eligible to apply for a Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grants (RCA). These are: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor, and Librarian I-IV.
2. An RCA will not be awarded for the purpose of obtaining an advanced academic degree and cannot be used to fund student theses or dissertations. This does not preclude the use of RCA funds to hire students at an hourly rate to assist faculty members with their research or creative endeavors.

¹ From the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board rules, Chapter 13. Financial Planning, Subchapter G. Research Development Fund

3. Except in extraordinary circumstances, an applicant is limited to one source of funding (RCA, RGD, RPS, or minigrant project support/MG-PS) in a single year. Furthermore, the recipient of an RCA in a given year is ineligible to apply for a new RCA the following year although they may apply for a second year extension with sufficient justification.
4. New researchers or faculty members who have not utilized Faculty Research Grants or Research/Creative Activity Grants in the past are encouraged to apply and may receive bonus points if they meet the criteria listed on page 4.
5. Faculty members who will be on sabbatical or faculty development leave during the term of the award are eligible for an RCA in support of their work if they do not have other financial support, but they are not eligible to receive summer salary.
6. Research/Creative Activity Grants should be considered seed money and are not intended to support the continuation of research funded from external awards or continuation projects from internal awards (pre-existing awards with a continuing theme), including previous FRG or RCA awards, with the exception of Research Pilot Studies (RPS) awards and minigrant awards for project support (MG-PS). If applicable, a faculty member who has previously received an FRG or RCA should justify in the proposal why another RCA is warranted (rather than submitting an application for external funds). To be competitive, the research or creative activity should target a new and/or innovative area or propose innovative approaches to a problem. Initial research to enhance external grant applications is encouraged.
7. For resubmission of a previously unsuccessful FRG or RCA application, a faculty member should describe clearly in an addendum to the proposal how the URC's comments from the previous competition were incorporated into the revised proposal.
8. Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant funds may not be used to pay for research activities or equipment that are, or have been, supported with grant funds from an external sponsor or from university sources (i.e., they cannot be used to supplant).
9. Faculty members who have access to research or creative activity funds from other sources are encouraged to exhaust all alternative funding pathways prior to applying for an RCA.
10. In the expenditure of RCA funds, a recipient is subject to all local, state, and federal fiscal regulations and SFA policies and procedures.
11. Research proposals selected for funding that involve the use of human subjects, laboratory animals, or hazardous materials must be accompanied by a memorandum of approval from the chair of the appropriate university committee prior to award. These committees are: Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Environmental Safety and Health/Radiation Committee, Biosafety Committee, and Public Health Committee.
12. An RCA recipient must attend a brief orientation session with ORSP to review the terms of the grant and to provide an opportunity for the faculty member to ask questions about use of funds, grant accounts, and grant management.

13. An RCA recipient must provide progress and final reports about his/her project as required by ORSP. The final report must consist of a 3-5 page (single or double-spaced) report that includes a description of project activities and outcomes for each project objective, as well as a 200-word abstract of the research findings or creative outcomes suitable for posting on the ORSP web site.
14. The project should result in faculty publications, grant applications, or other form of scholarly advancement. Any publication, presentation, or exhibition resulting from an RCA shall acknowledge that "The project was funded by a Stephen F. Austin State University Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant."

Copies of publications, DVDs, or other appropriate media that constitute documentation of a published work or exhibition shall be filed by the project director with the ORSP and with Center for Digital Scholarship (CDS@sfasu.edu) at the Steen Library for submission as a research project in the university's digital archive ScholarWorks (<http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/>).

Methods of Evaluating Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant Proposals

Because grant proposals are often improved as a result of internal peer review, the University Research Council (URC) strongly recommends that departments and colleges establish peer review procedures. The procedures should be completed in time for the applicant to make revisions prior to the final deadline for proposal submission.

A. Discussion of the Proposals

1. In preparation for the first review meeting, URC members should read the proposals and prepare preliminary scores and a list of questions, as applicable. In this and subsequent meetings, proposals will be discussed by the URC.
2. If, after preliminary discussion of a proposal, there are unresolved questions, a member of the URC may be assigned to contact the applicant. The URC member will contact the applicant and will obtain answers to the questions of the URC. As applicable, the URC will then briefly discuss the proposal again with input from the designated URC member.
3. Final scoring will be completed after URC discussions are completed.
4. After URC members have completed scoring the proposals, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) will compile the scores in the form of a table. The table will have a row for each proposal that lists the numerical scores received for each criterion. Totals, medians, and means will be calculated.

B. Ranking of Proposals

1. After the table of scores has been discussed, members of the URC will determine the rating cut-off for proposals to be funded and the amount of funding each proposal should receive. After discussion, the ten voting members of the URC will formulate a funding recommendation that will be adopted if a simple majority of the URC is in favor of the recommendation.

2. The URC chair will submit the Council's recommendations to the Provost/VPAA for approval and applicants will be notified of the Council's decision.
3. Applicants will be notified of awards in early December and funds released so that projects can start in January.
4. The URC chair will provide a summary of written comments upon request.

Budget Guidelines - Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant Funds

The number of RCA awards and the total amount of each award is dependent on the amount of funds available annually through the Research Enhancement Program. This amount is approved by the Board of Regents in the annual budget.

Faculty Compensation

Spring Semester – Recipients are expected to commit a sufficient amount of time to their projects during the academic year to ensure successful outcomes as detailed in their grant applications. Extra compensation is not provided for this effort.

Summer Sessions – A summer salary is provided for faculty members who request compensation for the equivalent of one summer term in their grant application. During the summer session for which they are being paid, faculty members are expected to commit 100% of their effort to the project.

It is expected that a faculty member will commit effort to the project (on campus and/or in the field collecting data) commensurate with the percentage of salary paid (e.g., 100% for 100%) during the summer session for which they are paid from an RCA.

Salaries equal one full-time summer session for the faculty member at the regular rate of pay. A faculty member who is not teaching two courses in each summer session may elect to split the summer salary across both terms at 50% effort.

Allowable Costs

In addition to faculty summer salary, funds may be awarded up to \$10,000 to support:

1. Hourly wages and benefits for student assistants;
2. Non-capital equipment;
3. Expendable materials, supplies, chemicals/reagents;
4. Travel to collect data (travel to conferences and student travel paid with these funds is not allowed); and
5. Contractual and other expenses. Contractual expenses must be reasonable and justified in terms of project objectives.

All line items should be itemized and justified in the budget justification section of the grant application.

Note: At the conclusion of an award, all equipment, materials, and supplies purchased using RCA funds may continue to be used by the faculty member. Since these items belong to SFA and not the faculty member, these items are to remain with the department of the faculty member in the event that the faculty member leaves the University.

Instructions for Preparing a Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant Proposal

Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant applicants may seek advice from University Research Council members or from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs in preparing a proposal. It is strongly encouraged that advice be sought prior to the deadline for submitting a proposal to the applicant's academic departmental chair. The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs will notify applicants of any deviations from the proposal guidelines as time allows up until the final deadline, but ultimate responsibility for adherence to guidelines rests with the applicant.

A proposal must be prepared according to the following instructions:

1. Type or word-process the proposal on 8½ x 11-inch white paper. Use one-inch margins on all sides. The print must be clear and legible and no more than 15 characters per inch (e.g., Times Roman 12 or Arial 11).
2. The proposal should outline the proposed approach to the problem. Place the proposal sections in the following order:
 - Cover page (standard format)
 - Budget justification
 - Abstract
 - Narrative (limited to 10 pages)
 1. objectives or specific aims
 2. literature review, as applicable to the discipline
 3. project justification
 4. methodology or procedures/plan of operation/activities
 5. work schedule
 6. expected outcomes
 7. proposed evaluation
 8. plans for dissemination
 - Bibliography/references, as applicable to the discipline
 - Appendices (if any) - For resubmissions, include a description of how reviewer comments were addressed
 - Vita for PI
 - Vita for Co-PI, if applicable
3. The line item budget justification does not have a page limit and may be single- or double-spaced.
4. The abstract, which precedes the narrative section, is a brief yet thorough explanation of the proposed project. The abstract may be single- or double-spaced, and should not exceed 200 words.
5. Page numbering should begin with the narrative section. Pages should be numbered at the top right or bottom center of each page.
6. The narrative section must be double-spaced. The proposal narrative is limited to 10 double-spaced, one-sided pages. The narrative does not include the cover page, line item budget justification, abstract, bibliography/references, appendices, or vita.

7. A work schedule must be included in the narrative section of the proposal. The work schedule may be single-spaced, with double spacing between the dates. See examples at the end of this section.
8. The bibliography/references, appendices, and vita may be single-spaced. The vita is limited to two, one-sided pages; there are no page limits for references and appendices.
9. Compile the pages into complete sets, including all attachments, and staple each set in the upper left-hand corner or use a bulldog clip. Please use no other bindings, folders, or covers.
10. Please note that the original and the 12 copies of your proposal must be prepared at individual or departmental expense.

The dean retains one copy for his/her files and submits 11 copies and one copy with original cover page signatures to ORSP no later than the published deadline.
11. Revisions to the proposal, based on comments from your department chair, dean, ORSP, or college advisory committee, may be made up until the final submission deadline to ORSP.
12. Please note that the URC may choose not to review a proposal that does not meet the specifications stated above.

Cover Page and Budget Justification Instructions

You may obtain the cover page from ORSP or from ORSP's Web site:
<http://www.sfasu.edu/orsp/internal.html>. If you have any questions, call extension 6606.

Proposal Title: Enter the title of your RCA proposal.

Applicant Name: Enter your name (investigator) in the first column. Enter the name of the co-investigator, if applicable, in the second column.

Department: Enter the name of the academic department or office of the investigator in the first column. Enter the academic department or office of the co-investigator, if applicable, in the second column.

Time per Week on Project - Long Term: Enter the number of hours per week that the investigator, and co-investigator if applicable, expects to spend working on the project during the Spring semester. Example: 4 hrs/wk (this is a non-binding estimate).

Summer Salary: Each participating faculty member may request salary and benefits for up to 100% of one summer session, 50% for up to two summer sessions, or may elect to receive no summer compensation from the project. You should select "SS1, SS2, both SS1 and SS2, or None" to indicate the time period(s) for which you are seeking remuneration for project activities. SS1 refers to Summer Session I; SS2 refers to Summer Session II. Note that you cannot receive salary in any one summer session that exceeds your normal rate of pay.

If both the principal investigator and the co-investigator request salary, explain in your line item budget justification why salary is required for both investigators. Also, indicate the percentage of

time during a summer session for which you would like to be reimbursed (e.g., 25%, 50%, or 100%).

It is expected that a faculty member will commit effort to the project (on campus and/or in the field collecting data) commensurate with the percentage of salary paid (e.g., 100% for 100%) during the summer session for which they are paid from an RCA.

Indicate if you have received a Faculty Research Grant / RCA before: Indicate each fiscal year for which you have been awarded an FRG or RCA. For example, if you were awarded an FRG for the period of September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014, select “2014.” If you have not received an FRG/RCA for the years listed, do not mark any item.

Resubmissions: Indicate if this is a resubmission and that you have incorporated previous URC review comments.

New Investigators: Indicate if you have been in an RCA-eligible position (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or librarian) for less than five years. Indicate if you have never applied for an FRG or RCA before as lead investigator or are resubmitting an FRG or RCA proposal.

Signatures: Sign and date the cover page. If the proposal has an investigator and a co-investigator, both persons must sign and date the cover page. The chair and dean for the investigator and co-investigator must also sign the cover page.

Budget Summary and Justification

Investigator's Salary: This item should be left blank. Explain your request in the line item budget justification. You do not need to calculate an actual salary amount. Your salary and benefits will be calculated based upon the amount and percent of time the URC approves. If applicable, indicate which year you are requesting summer compensation. *In any year a salary cap may be imposed by the URC.*

Student Assistants: Enter the amount of wages needed for undergraduate or graduate student assistants, if any. Graduate Research Assistantships are not allowed. In your line item budget justification, indicate the number of hours the student(s) will devote and the rate of pay. You must pay at least minimum wage (currently \$7.25/hour). The pay rate you request should be reasonable in relation to the level of work the student will be performing. Significantly higher hourly rates require justification. Outline the student's responsibilities in the budget justification.

Operating Supplies: Enter the amount of your request for minor equipment, materials, operating supplies, and chemicals/reagents, if any. Operating supplies include costs for photocopies, postage, long distance calls, lab supplies, etc. Remember to include an estimate of shipping and handling costs, as applicable. For any purchases > \$500 each item, explain in the line item budget justification what each item is, its cost, and why the item is necessary for your project.

Travel to Collect Data: Enter the total amount of your request for travel to collect data. Do not request travel to present research findings, which may be funded in part through a minigrant for travel support (MG-TS) the following year. Consult the SFA Travel Office for information on meal, lodging, and mileage calculation rates. Other travel expenses include airfare, parking, and rental car fees. Be sure to detail travel expenses in the budget justification. Student travel cannot be paid using these funds.

Contractual Expenses: Enter the total amount of your request for non-SFA services or activities, including sample analysis performed at another institution. Be sure to detail and justify your request in the budget justification.

Other: Enter the total amount for all other costs you are requesting through the grant, if any. Explain in the line item budget justification what you are requesting, the cost, and the purpose of your request.

TOTAL: If you complete the form electronically, your total budget request will be calculated for you. Otherwise, ensure the line items in the Budget Summary section equal your total. Please leave the "Recommended by Council" column of the Budget Summary section blank.

Criteria for Evaluating RESEARCH Grant Proposals

The University Research Council will evaluate **Research** proposals based on the criteria listed below. The written proposal should clearly meet the evaluation criteria to receive a competitive score. The faculty member may discuss his/her proposal and the evaluation criteria with a member of the Council before the written proposal is submitted to ORSP (final deadline).

A. Significance of the Proposal (30 points)

1. The proposed project should improve the faculty member's knowledge and increase his/her ability to conduct more research in the area of interest.
2. The new knowledge gained from the project should be significant to the faculty member's academic discipline. The project should require the use of knowledge and skills usually possessed only by those having terminal degrees in the field.
3. The originality of the research often determines its success and recognition. As a result, the project should possess unique characteristics in comparison to similar projects.
4. Once the project is completed, similar projects in the same discipline should follow. In some cases, it may be possible to obtain grant money from outside sources for further research. Such success enhances the University's prestige, provides a better learning environment for its students, and enables the University to better the community at large.
5. Applicants should show how they plan to disseminate the results of the RCA through presentations at professional meetings and/or publications in refereed journals. The project should be designed to lead to further study.

B. Proposed Approach (30 points)

1. The proposal should outline the objectives or specific aims, methodology, plan of operation/activities, expected outcomes, proposed evaluation, and plans for future dissemination.
2. The proposal should clearly describe the proposed procedures. The applicant should provide evidence that other professionals within the field will find the procedures acceptable.
3. The proposal's objectives should be clear, concise, and understandable to the Council members, who may not be specialists in the discipline.
4. The written proposal should follow the prescribed format as described in this document (see pages 5-8).
5. The applicant must demonstrate knowledge of research within the area of interest by discussing the research findings of others who have made significant contributions in the area and cite any relevant literature or critical response.

C. Feasibility of the Proposal (20 points)

1. The proposal should clearly establish a feasible schedule for the proposed project.
2. The applicant should be able to conduct the project within the proposed time period.
3. The applicant should be able to complete the project with the funding requested.
4. The applicant should be able to complete the project with the available physical resources.

D. Applicant's Record (5 points)

1. The applicant should demonstrate his/her ability to carry out the proposed project; therefore, the applicant's previous success in research should be presented clearly in the proposal.
2. In addition, the applicant should list any previous projects, including those supported by other grants at SFA, in the vita along with any resulting presentations, publications, works, or performances.

E. Budget and Cost Effectiveness (15 points)

The applicant should request an adequate and relevant budget for the proposed project. See the section titled "Budget Guidelines – Research and Creative Activity Grant Funds" for a discussion of allowable costs.

F. Bonus Points (up to 10)

The University encourages proposals from beginning researchers and new faculty members, as well as new and innovative lines of inquiry from established faculty members.

- Five points will be added for the first RCA application ever submitted by a faculty member (as primary investigator).
- Five points will be added for a faculty member employed by the University in an RCA-eligible position less than five years, including those faculty members who have previously submitted an unsuccessful Faculty Research Grant application.

G. Recommendation

- Fund as submitted
- Fund with revisions
- Not recommended for funding, but has merit. Recommend resubmission with revisions in a future competition.
- Not recommended for funding

Criteria for Evaluating CREATIVE ACTIVITY Grant Proposals

The University Research Council will evaluate **Creative Activity** proposals based on the criteria listed below. The written proposal should clearly meet the evaluation criteria to receive a competitive score. The faculty member may discuss his/her proposal and the evaluation criteria with a member of the Council before the written proposal is submitted to ORSP (final deadline).

A. Significance of the Proposal (30 points)

1. The proposed project should create further creative work in the PI/PD's area of interest.
2. The project should require the use of knowledge and skills usually possessed only by those having terminal degrees in the field.
3. The originality of the creative activity often determines its success and recognition. As a result, the project should possess unique characteristics in comparison to similar projects.
4. Once the project is completed, similar projects in the same discipline should follow. In some cases, it may be possible to obtain grant money from outside sources for further creative endeavors. Such success enhances the University's prestige, provides a better learning environment for its students, and enables the University to better the community at large.
5. Applicants should show how they plan to disseminate the results of the RCA through presentations at professional meetings and/or publications in refereed journals. The project should be designed to lead to further study or an exhibition.

B. Proposed Approach (30 points)

1. The proposal should outline the objectives or specific aims, methodology, plan of operation/activities, expected outcomes, proposed evaluation, and plans for future dissemination.
2. The proposal should clearly describe the proposed procedures. The applicant should provide evidence that other professionals within the field will find the procedures acceptable.
3. The proposal's objectives should be clear, concise, and understandable to the Council members, who may not be specialists in the discipline.
4. The written proposal should follow the prescribed format as described in this document (see pages 5-8).
5. The applicant must demonstrate knowledge of existing work within the area of interest by discussing the work of others who have made significant contributions in the area and cite any relevant literature or critical response.

C. Feasibility of the Proposal (20 points)

1. The proposal should clearly establish a feasible schedule for the proposed project.
2. The applicant should be able to conduct the project within the proposed time period.
3. The applicant should be able to complete the project with the funding requested.
4. The applicant should be able to complete the project with the available physical resources.

D. Applicant's Record (5 points)

1. The applicant should demonstrate his/her ability to carry out the proposed project; therefore, the applicant's previous success in creative activities should be presented clearly in the proposal.
2. In addition, the applicant should list any previous projects, including those supported by an RCA at SFA, in the vita along with any resulting presentations, publications, works, or performances.

E. Budget and Cost Effectiveness (15 points)

The applicant should request an adequate and relevant budget for the proposed project. See the section titled "Budget Guidelines - Faculty Research Grant Funds" for a discussion of allowable costs.

F. Bonus Points (up to 10)

The University encourages proposals from previously unfunded faculty and new faculty members, as well as new and innovative lines of inquiry from established faculty members.

- Five points will be added for the first RCA application ever submitted by a faculty member (as primary investigator).
- Five points will be added for a faculty member employed by the University in an RCA-eligible position less than five years, including those faculty members who have previously submitted an unsuccessful Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant application.

G. Recommendation

- Fund as submitted
- Fund with revisions
- Not recommended for funding, but has merit. Recommend resubmission with revisions in a future competition.
- Not recommended for funding