

Research Enhancement Program

Original Implementation: September 1965

Last Revision: April 25, 2017

The Research Enhancement Program at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) encourages and enhances research and creative opportunities for faculty members, serves as support for innovative research, and provides seed monies to attract external funding.

Description: The Research Enhancement Program consists of three components: (1) the Faculty Research Grant Program, which provides substantive support for research and scholarly creative activities; (2) the Minigrant Program, which provides opportunities for faculty to carry out small projects or preliminary research activities that will increase their competitiveness in acquiring additional funding; and (3) the Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) Program, which provides support for graduate students working toward research-based theses and dissertations.

Eligibility: Individuals with a full-time, tenured or tenure-track academic appointment as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or librarian I-IV are eligible to apply for Faculty Research Grants and Minigrants. Members of the graduate faculty serving as faculty advisors may apply for GRA support on behalf of their students.

Compliance: Recipients of research enhancement funds are subject to university policies as well as state and federal rules and regulations. For research projects involving human subjects, laboratory animals, or hazardous materials, the applicant must provide a memorandum of approval from the chair of the appropriate university committee to the Office of Research and Sponsored Program (ORSP) prior to project implementation.

Faculty Research Grant (FRG) and Minigrant (MG) Programs: The University Research Council (URC) establishes guidelines for the content and format of proposals and creates criteria for the evaluation of applications. These guidelines include, at a minimum, the following provisions:

1. Funds cannot be used by faculty or students to obtain advanced academic degrees; however, these funds may be used by faculty to hire students to work on specific aspects of a project.
2. An applicant with an FRG or MG award must follow URC guidelines.
3. Funds cannot be used to supplant funding for research activities or equipment provided by another source.
4. Recipients must submit progress and/or final reports as required by ORSP.
5. Any publication, presentation, or exhibition resulting from an FRG or MG must acknowledge the support provided by the Research Enhancement Program at SFA.
6. The project director must submit copies of publications, exhibitions, or other media to ORSP and may also send this to the Center for Digital Scholarship.

The URC makes recommendations for funding of FRGs to the chair of the council. If an award exceeds \$5,000, the provost and vice president for academic affairs must approve the funding.

Graduate Research Program: Faculty advisors may identify and submit applications on behalf of graduate students.

The content, format, and criteria for evaluation are determined by the URC. These guidelines include, at a minimum, the following provisions:

1. Awardees must be working toward a research-based thesis/dissertation or equivalent project. Non-thesis graduate students are ineligible.
2. Students receiving awards must be released from teaching responsibilities.
3. Graduate Research Assistantships can be up to twelve (12) months in duration. Faculty sponsors can apply for a second 12-month assistantship for a student, but assistantships may not exceed a total of 24 months per student. For continued funding, the faculty sponsor must demonstrate student progress to the URC each semester.

The URC makes recommendations for funding to the chair of the council who, in turn, must obtain approval from the dean of the graduate school for funding. If approved, the chair of the council notifies the provost and vice president of academic affairs of the award.

Cross Reference: Human Research Subjects Protection (8.4); Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (8.6); Recombinant DNA and/or Infectious Biohazards in Teaching and Research (8.9)

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Contact for Revision: Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

Forms: Faculty Research Grant and Minigrant applications

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs