RESEARCH/CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RCA) GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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Brief Overview of Program

Applicants must follow the guidelines and instructions below. Applicants should also review the separate "*Policies, Procedures, and Evaluation Criteria for Awarding Research/Creative Activity (RCA) Grants"* for scoring criteria and more details about the program

Applications are reviewed and funds are awarded by the University Research Council (URC) and managed by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS). The URC may choose not to review a proposal that does not meet the specifications stated in this document.

Applicants may seek advice from URC members or from ORGS 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. ORGS 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.

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 and creative contributions designed to advance artistic accomplishment, principally in art, music, theater, dance, and similar areas within the performing and visual arts. Summer salaries are intended to compensate faculty members while they conduct intensive project activities during the term in which they are paid.

Eligibility: Individuals with a full-time, tenure-track academic appointment detailed in SFA policy 8.11 are eligible to apply for the RCA Grant. These are: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor, and Librarian I-IV. Non-tenure track faculty are not eligible.

Time Line: The annual RCA competition is held during the fall semester. Funded proposals are carried out in the spring and summer semesters (January – August).

Application Categories: Applications are divided into the below two categories and are evaluated based on separate criteria:
1. Research
2. Creative Activity.

Number of Awards: The number of 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 SFASU budget.

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

Allowable Costs: In addition to faculty 6-week summer salary, funding up to $10,000 is allowable for the following purposes:
- Supplies and materials
- Hourly wages and benefits for student assistants
- Wages and benefits to other staff to assist in the project
- Non-capital equipment (a single item less than $5,000; See the SFASU Property Manual for definitions and examples)
- Expendable materials, supplies, chemicals/reagents
- Travel to collect data (travel to conferences is not allowed nor is student travel). For Creative Activity proposals, the collection of data may include residencies or appropriate site visits to aid in the creation of project materials.
- Contractual services (i.e. translator, sample analysis, etc.)

Itemize and justify all line items requested in the budget justification section of the grant application.

Note: All items purchased are the property of SFA, not the investigator. At the conclusion of an award, all items purchased using RCA funds may continue to be used by the faculty member. In the event that the faculty member leaves SFA, the items remain with the department of the faculty member.

Unallowable Costs: Activities/items that are never eligible for REP support, regardless of worthiness, include:
- Development or evaluation of curricular materials or instructional support;
- Non-faculty requests (students or staff), or requests from lecturers, adjunct or visiting faculty;
- Professional or support staff salaries;
- Personal computers, printers, and portable communication devices (upgrades or software will be considered if directly related to research activities; laptops or computers required for field or advanced computational work may be considered with adequate justification);
- Materials for routine use in academic courses;
- Professional development activities, including speaker fees;
- Program development, curriculum development, or related evaluation activities;
- University limitations on the use of the funds (e.g., non-per diem food, door prizes, gifts, participant support);
- Support for faculty dissertations or student theses and dissertations;
- Salary for research assistantships/graduate student appointments. Faculty that will require a fulltime GRA in order to conduct the research activity should contact ORSP to discuss alternative funding options.

In addition, requested funds should not supplant other funding sources (i.e. department, state, federal).

Instructions for Preparing a Faculty Research/Creative Activity Grant Proposal

A proposal must be prepared according to the following instructions and submitted in Cayuse:

A. **Formatting**
1. Type or word-process the proposal on 8½ x 11-inch white paper.
2. Use one-inch margins on all sides.
3. The print must be clear and legible and no more than 15 characters per inch (e.g., Times Roman 12 or Arial 11).
4. Single sided

B. **Submission**
Submission is through the Cayuse portal in your mySFA account.

C. **Proposal**
Outline the proposed approach to the problem. These will be uploaded in Cayuse.
1. Abstract
2. Narrative (limited to 10 pages)
   a. objectives or specific aims
   b. literature review
   c. project justification
   d. methodology or procedures/plan of operation/activities
   e. work schedule
   f. expected outcomes
   g. proposed evaluation
   h. plans for dissemination
3. Bibliography/references
4. Appendices (if any) - For resubmissions, include a description of how reviewer comments were addressed
5. Vita for Principal Investigator (PI)
6. Vita for Co-PI, if applicable

   • **Budget Justification**: Written explanation of budget line items.
   • No page limit
   • Single- or double-spaced

Justification contains the following sections, in this order:
1. Investigator's salary
2. Student Assistant
3. Other salaries
4. Operating supplies
5. Purchases over $500 each
6. Travel to collect data
7. Contractual (non-SFA employees)
8. Other

D. **Abstract**: Brief yet thorough explanation of the proposed project.
   • Max word count: 200 words
   • Single- or double-spaced

E.   **Narrative**: Does not include the cover page, line item budget justification, abstract, bibliography/references, appendices, and vita.

- 10-page limit, one-sided pages
- Double-spaced
- Page numbering begins with the narrative section
- Pages should be numbered at the top right or bottom center of each page

Narrative contains the following sections in this order:

1. Objective or specific aims
2. Literature review, as appropriate
3. Project justification*
4. Methodology or procedures/plan of operation/activities
5. Work schedule (single space with double spacing between the dates)
6. Expected outcomes
7. Proposal evaluation
8. Plans for dissemination

If your discipline is considered creative and you are applying for a research project, or your academic field is considered research based and you are applying for a creative activity, your narrative should also explain why your project meets the criteria for that proposal type.

F.   **Bibliography/references** and **Appendices** may be single-spaced. Neither have page limits.

G.   **Vita**
- May be single-spaced
- 2-page limit, one-sided pages

Budget Summary/Justification Instructions

The application has two columns – the first is for the investigator and the second is for a co-investigator if applicable.

1a.   **Proposal title**: Enter the project title.

1b.   **Proposal type:** Select either "Research" OR "Creative Activity."

2.   **Applicant name**: Enter your name (investigator) in the first column. If applicable, enter the name of the co-investigator in the second column.

3.   **Department**: Enter the respective academic department.

4.   **Estimated time per week on project (spring semester)**: Enter the number of hours per week that the investigator and co-investigator (if applicable) will work on the project.

5.   **Investigator summer salary**: Select "yes" or "no" to indicate whether you are requesting summer salary from the grant.

An applicant may request salary and benefits for up to 100% of one summer session, 50% for two summer sessions, or may elect to receive no summer compensation from the project.

See instructions for #9 below for limitations to summer salary requests when a co-investigator is included.

6.   **Previous RCA Awards**: Indicate if you have received an RCA Grant in the past five years. For instance, if you were awarded an RCA during September 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018, select "2018." If you have not received an RCA for the years listed, do not mark any item.

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

8.   **New investigators (does not apply to co-investigator):** 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 RCA before as lead investigator <u>or</u> are resubmitting an RCA proposal.

Budget Summary Section and separate Budget Justification
Complete each of the below sections as needed. If no funds are requested for an item, enter '0'.

Itemize and justify all line items requested in the budget justification section of the grant application.

9.   **Investigator's Salary**: Put in Cayuse box with Internal Budget information

<u>Budget Justification:</u> Explain your request but do not calculate an actual salary amount. Your salary and benefits will be calculated based upon the amount and percent of time the URC approves.

As the Investigator*,* you may request salary and benefits for up to 100% of one summer session, 50% for two summer sessions, or you may elect to receive no summer compensation from the project.

A salary cap may be imposed by the Council.

If a co-investigator is named on the project, there are three possibilities for salary:
          a. Neither PI or Co-PI receive summer salary.
          b. Either the PI or the Co-PI receive summer salary.
          c. Both the PI and the Co-PI receive 50% of a full-time 6-week summer salary.

If awarded, ORGS will confirm with you, your department, and Human Resources which summer sessions(s) you are available to work on the project.

You cannot receive salary in any one summer session that exceeds your normal rate of pay.

10. **Student Assistants**: Enter the amount of wages & fringe benefits needed for undergraduate student assistants.

  Budget Justification:
   a. Outline the student's responsibilities

   b Indicate the number of hours the student(s) will devote and the rate of pay and fringe benefits.

  The requested rate of pay rate should be reasonable in relation to the level of work the student will be performing. Contact your department administrative assistant or chair with any questions concerning what your department typically pays for that type of work. You must pay at least minimum wage; contact Human Resources for the current rate.

  Calculate benefits at 2% of salary. Please note that actual benefits incurred will be charged to your award and may reduce the total amount available. If a student does not have a full course load, benefits increase to 7.65% of salary.

11. **Other Salaries**: Enter the amount requested for other SFA employees (non-student) who would be paid to work on your project. This may include a statistician, analysis of samples, etc. You will also need to include fringe benefits. Refer to the "Fringe Benefits Calculation" for the current SFA rates: http://www.sfasu.edu/orsp/tam_part3.html#fringe

  Please note that actual benefits incurred will be charged to your award and may reduce the total award amount available.

  Budget Justification: Explain who will be paid, the pay rate, the number of hours, and outline their responsibilities. Faculty/staff cannot receive salary that exceeds their normal rate of pay.

12. **Operating Supplies**: Enter the amount for minor equipment (non-capital), materials, operating supplies, and chemicals/reagents, if any. Operating supplies include costs for photocopies, postage, lab supplies, microfilm, etc. Remember to include an estimate of shipping and handling costs, as applicable.

  Budget Justification: Explain the types of materials requested.

13. **Purchases > $500**: Enter total amount requested.

  Budget Justification: Explain purpose for each item, its cost, and why the item is necessary for your project.

14. **Travel to Collect Data**: Enter the total amount requested. Consult the SFASU Travel Office for information on meal, lodging, and mileage calculation rates. Other travel expenses include airfare, parking, and rental car fees.

  Unallowable: travel to present research findings and student travel.

  Budget Justification: Detail travel costs, either by line item or by trip, and explain the necessity for your project. (For Creative Activity proposals,) The collection of data may include residencies or appropriate site visits to aid in the creation of project materials.

15. **Contractual Expenses:** Enter the total amount requested for non-SFASU services or activities, including sample analysis performed at another institution.

  Budget Justification: Detail why the work is required, how the contracted entities are chosen, and the amount each will be paid.

16. **Other**: Costs that do not fit in the above categories. Enter the total amount for all other costs you are requesting through the grant.

  Budget Justification: Detail each item (what you are requesting, the cost, and the purpose).

17.   **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.

Compliance Areas – Mandatory

18.   Select "NA" if none are applicable. .

Research proposals selected for funding that involve the use of human subjects, laboratory animals, or hazardous materials are required to receive approval from the respective university committee prior to the start of the award period.

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.

PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

Do not submit! This checklist is solely to help you make a final review.

All required sections in the following order:

1. Cover page (standard form)
2. Budget justification- mathematically correct
3. Abstract
4. Narrative
   a. objective or specific aims
   b. literature review, as appropriate
   c. project justification
   d. methodology or procedures/plan of operation/activities
   e. work schedule
   f. expected outcomes
   g. proposal evaluation
   h. plans for dissemination

5. Bibliography/references, as appropriate
6. Appendices (if any) - for resubmissions include a description of how reviewer comments were addressed
7. Vita for PI 8. Vita for Co-PI, as applicable

Formatting

1. Type or word-process the proposal on 8 x 11-inch white paper.
2. Use one-inch margins on all sides.
3. Clear and legible with no more than 15 characters per inch (e.g., Times Roman 12 or Arial 11).
4. Single sided

Abstract - no more than 200 words

Page Numbering
1. Begins with Narrative Section
2. Place at top right or bottom center of pages

Narrative
1. Double-spaced (work schedule may be single spaced but double between dates)
2. No more than 10 one-sided pages

Vita - no more than 2 one-sided pages

Previous final reports for minigrants or RCA grants on file with ORGS.