RESEARCH GRANTS COMMITTEE (RGC)

AWARDEE GUIDE
OCTOBER 2016

Office of the Vice President for
Research & Economic Development

Table of Contents

Table of Contents....1
Contact Information....1
Requests that Require OVPRED Approval....1
Additional Information....1
Award Eligibility....2
Ineligible Applicants/Conditions....2
Project Completion/Termination or Project Design/PI Change....2
Resignation from the University....2
Cost Share Match Information....3
RGC Award Fund and Spending Information....3
Awards with co-PIs:....4
Extension Requests....4
Budget Change Requests....4
RGC Annual and Final Reporting....5
Annual Reports....5
Final Reports....5
Reporting Information by RGC Funding Level....5

Contact Information

Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development (OVPRED)

Dr. Carl A. Pinkert, Vice President for Research and Economic Development (VPRED): cap@ua.edu
Dr. John C. Higginbotham, Associate Vice President for Research (AVPR): jhigginb@.ua.edu

Office for Sponsored Programs - RGC Coordinator

Angie Shotts, Coordinator of Research Support: ashotts@research.ua.edu

Contract & Grant Accounting

Amy Harvell, Accounting Specialist: aharvell@research.ua.edu

Requests that Require OVPRED Approval

Specific changes to the proposed project, budget, and timeline require approval from the OVPRED. The sections below address the common requests that require prior approval. When submitting a request that requires prior approval, the PI should email the request to Dr. Pinkert (VPRED) and copy Dr. Higginbotham (AVPR), the RGC Coordinator, the PI's Associate Dean for Research and/or the PI's department chair.

Additional Information

Additional information on the Research Grants Committee (RGC) program is available on the RGC website (http://osp.ua.edu/rgc_grants.html).

Award Eligibility

- **Only one proposal, as PI or co-PI, will be considered for funding per investigator during any proposal submission period.** An individual can have support for only one RGC project at a time (whether it is a single or joint application).
- **Former grant recipients are ineligible (as either PI or co-PI) for the same or lower Level award for three (3) years following the expiration of either a Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 award.** RGC grants awarded prior to 2015 (i.e., 2014 and before) are the equivalent of a Level 1 award.
- All faculty previously funded by the RGC must have submitted a final report and completed the deliverables required for the Level and year awarded.

Ineligible Applicants/Conditions

- Applications that do not follow all of the guidelines described in the RGC Manual will not be reviewed or considered for funding.
- Applicants who do not properly disclose other funding sources, both current and pending, will have their RGC Award revoked if it is determined there is duplicate funding for the same project.
- RGC funds may not be used for expenses incurred prior to the notification of the RGC award.
- **Former grant recipients are ineligible (as either PI or co-PI) for the same or lower Level award for three (3) years following the expiration of either a Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 award.** RGC grants awarded prior to 2015 (i.e., 2014 and before) are the equivalent of a Level 1 award.

Project Completion/Termination or Project Design/PI Change

An RGC award may be cancelled in whole or in part if the Awardee makes material changes such as changes in employment status, changes in project plans, location or time available for the project, or receipt of other grant support for the same project.

- Unused funds are automatically canceled upon termination of the project or resignation of the PI and must be returned to the OVPRED. Requests to change a co-PI to PI status must be submitted to the VPRED for approval.
- No-cost extensions for extraordinary circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the VPRED. See the No-cost Extension Requests section below for more information.
- If there is a change in the project such that the project differs materially from the objectives as stated in the original application, such change must be reported, in writing, to the VPRED for approval.
- Should a recipient abandon the project, the recipient must inform and send a summary report to the RGC Coordinator which includes an accounting of all funds expended and remaining for approval from the VPRED.

Resignation from the University

If a faculty member resigns or is terminated from the University, the OVPRED has the discretion to review, freeze or close an RGC funded award. The faculty member should notify the OVPRED of any change in employment status during the RGC grant period. If the PI or a co-PI leaves the University before completing the project, the following must be filed with the OVPRED:

- Statement of resignation with its effective date.
- Contact information upon resignation from the University, including address, phone number and email address.
- Full and complete report of progress to date is required.
- A report of the condition and location of any equipment purchased with RGC funds.

- If a faculty member receives an award and then leaves UA before the award's start date, s/he will not receive the funds. If the recipient leaves UA after expending a portion of the funds, any unspent funds must be returned to the OVPRED. Funds spent after that date, including funds spent for expenses that will occur after the last day of UA employment, will not be paid by the grant.
- Projects with co-PIs may submit a request to have a co-PI designated as the PI for the project. Requests to have a co-PI made the PI of the award should be submitted to the VPRED for approval.

Cost Share Match Information

Awards with cost share match will be assigned a specific fund number for the committed match in Banner. The PI's departmental administrator should coordinate allocating the cost share funds using the Budget Office form in Banner. The FOAPAL provided on the Cost Sharing Authorization Form submitted with the RGC application must be used to process the match. When the departmental/college cost share match is committed in Banner, the department administrator should contact the RGC C&GA representative. The dedication of departmental/college cost share match must be complete before access to the OVPRED award funds is possible. Level 2 – RGC Collaborative Projects with multiple years of funding may provide the cost share match annually.

Contact Amy Harvell in Contract & Grant Accounting for assistance with cost share match funding.

RGC Award Fund and Spending Information

The RGC award fund will not be established until the awardee has submitted the required forms to the Office for Sponsored Programs. All RGC awardees must return the completed Award Conditions with signatures and the RGC ICS with all signatures to the RGC Coordinator. If a project will require approval from the Office for Research Compliance (ORC) for human subjects (IRB), animal subjects (IACUC), export control, hazardous materials, etc. the PI must submit the approval information and expiration date to the RGC Coordinator.

It is the PI's responsibility to share the initial and annual ORC approvals with the RGC Coordinator. The RGC fund will become inactive and expenses will not be processed if ORC approvals expire during the award period.

Contact Angie Shotts, RGC Coordinator, with questions about the criteria to have RGC award funds established.

Monitoring Budget and Spending Rate

External sponsors consider expenditure rates to be an indication of project progress. If, for example, the project is half way through the period of performance but only 25% of the funds have been expended, the sponsor may question whether appropriate progress is being made, even if progress reports have been submitted. An appropriate expenditure rate also applies to RGC awards. Fund expenditures should be closely aligned to the project timeline and budget justification.

PIs and co-PIs should work closely with their department administrator to monitor the RGC award fund and ensure expenses are occurring in a timely manner to support the awarded project. For example, supplies necessary to conduct the project should be purchased reasonably early in the award period. Expenditures for supplies during the last remaining months of the award period may not, depending on how the items were described in the proposal, receive approval.

Processing Travel and Other Expenses

PIs for RGC awards should work closely with their departmental administrator to process expenditures for the award. Upon receiving official award notification from the OVPRED, it is recommended the PI meet with the departmental administrator to discuss the award and how to process the expenditures.

Travel expenses such as hotels and flights occurring after the project start date (May 15) may be purchased when the PI has received official award notification from the OVPRED. The PI should work directly with the departmental administrator to ensure department and university purchasing policies and procedures for the RGC award are followed. When applicable, Office for Research Compliance protocol approvals (IRB, IACUC, hazardous materials, etc.) are required before expenses may be incurred, including future travel expenditures.

Contact Amy Harvell in Contract & Grant Accounting for assistance with RGC fund numbers and expenditure processing.

Awards with co-PIs:

When the RGC project has co-PIs, only the PI and the PI's department administrator will have access to the Budget information in Banner and the ability to charge items to a department PCARD (credit card). Co-PI's departmental administrators should work with the PI's contact to process the purchase of supplies, coordinate travel, etc.

It is important that all co-PI's maintain communication with the PI regarding their portion of the budget and expenses to ensure the project is proceeding as proposed.

Extension Requests

No-cost extensions for extraordinary circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. All requests for a no-cost extension must be submitted to the VPRED with the AVPR, RGC Coordinator, the PI's Associate Dean for Research and/or the PI's department chair copied. The request must include:

1. An overview of the proposed project.
2. A justification for the extension.
3. The requested end date.
4. An overview of the remaining funds.
5. A timeline for activities that will occur during the extension.
6. A statement on the proposal's scope of work and if it will remain unchanged if the request is approved.

Budget Change Requests

Budget changes for extraordinary circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Changes to the awarded budget must be approved prior to incurring the expenses. Changes for small dollar amounts, especially those within the same line item, may not require review and approval. For example, if a proposal budget included a request for specific supplies and it is later realized that more of one item but less of another is needed, but the line item (Materials & Supplies) remains unchanged, it is unlikely approval is necessary. However, changes that involve larger dollar amount should be reviewed by Contact & Grant Accounting prior. Budget changes that move funds from one line item to another require prior approval unless the change is for an insignificant percentage of the award. For example, if the travel budgeted for the project has $45 remaining and additional supplies are required to complete the project, prior review may not be necessary.

Contact Amy Harvell in Contract & Grant Accounting for assistance in determining if a budget change requires OPVRED approval.

Budget change requests must be submitted by email to the VPRED with the AVPR, RGC Coordinator, the PI's Associate Dean for Research, and/or department chair copied. The request must include:

1. An overview of the proposed project.
2. The dollar amount of the request.

3. A clear explanation of which budget lines are being increased and decreased and the amount of each change.
4. A justification for the budget change.
5. A statement on the proposal's scope of work and if it will remain unchanged if the request is approved.

RGC Annual and Final Reporting

Starting in 2016, the annual and final reports are submitted through an online form. Unless an extension is approved by the Vice President for Research and Economic Development (VPRED), the annual and final reports are due by **August 12**. Both reports have three components:

1. Outcome data collection: The collection on the number of outcomes per project. This information is entered directly into the online form and is used for reporting the outcomes of the entire RGC program. Information on completed and pending outcomes is collected. Project Deliverables include, but are not limited to, publications, exhibitions, performances, conference presentations, proposal submissions, and awards from external agencies or foundations.
2. The summary report: A written overview of all aspects of the project. Additional information is detailed below.
3. Required Deliverables: A copy of one or more of the completed Deliverables.

Annual Reports

Annual reports are submitted for **Level 2 - RGC Collaborative Projects** and must address the Expectations and Required Deliverables for a Level 2 project as described in the RGC Proposal Instruction Manual from the award year. Annual reports should reflect the activities from May to May. For example, the first annual report for a 2015 Level 2 awardee will describe activities from May 2015 - May 2016.
The annual report must include:

- A synopsis of the proposed project.
- An overview of the recent activities.
- A detailed explanation of the progress to meet the Expectations and Required Deliverables as described in the RGC Proposal Instruction Manual from the award year.

Final Reports

The reporting period for final reports is the start date of the award through the submission of the report. For example, the reporting period for a 2014 award is May 2014 - August 2016.

Final reports must include:

- A synopsis of the proposed project.
- The outcomes that were expected at the time of submission.
- A of the summary of the scholarly activities/research completed.
- A description of how the project resulted in either furthering the research or scholarship mission of the University of Alabama and the faculty member, and/or resulted in additional extramural support.
- Details on <u>completed</u> and <u>anticipated</u> Required Deliverables such as exhibitions, publications, presentations, performances, external submissions, awards, etc. as described in the RGC Proposal Instruction Manual from the awarding year should be detailed in the report.

Reporting Information by RGC Funding Level

Level 1 - Standard RGC / RGC Seed Project and all 2014 Awardees: The final report must include a brief overview of the proposed project, the outcomes that were expected at the time of submission, and a of the summary of the scholarly activities/research completed. The report should describe how the project resulted in

either furthering the research or scholarship mission of the University of Alabama and the faculty member, and/or resulted in additional extramural support. Completed and anticipated outcomes such as exhibitions, publications, presentations, performances, external submissions, and awards should be detailed in the report. The reporting period is the start date through the submission of the report. For example, the reporting period for a 2014 award is May 2014 - August 2016.

Level 2 - RGC Collaborative Project: Annual and final reports must address the Expectations and Required Deliverables for a Level 2 award as described in the RGC Proposal Instruction Manual from the award year. The report should include a synopsis of the proposed project as well as an overview of the recent activities. In addition to providing a detailed explanation of the progress to meet the Expectations and Required Deliverables, the report should also describe all other completed and anticipated outcomes. Annual reports should reflect the activities from May to May. Final reports will include activities that occurred after the end date through the submission of the final report. For example, the first annual report for a 2015 Level 2 awardee will include information from May 2015 - May 2016. The final report, for a 3-year award, will include information from May 2017 - August 2018.

Level 3 - RGC Equipment Project: The final report must address the Expectations and Required Deliverables for a Level 3 award as described in the RGC Proposal Instruction Manual from the award year. The report should include a synopsis of the proposed project as well as an overview of the completed activities and progress. In addition to providing a detailed explanation of the project's ability to fulfill the Expectations and Required Deliverables, the report should also describe all other completed and anticipated outcomes. The reporting period is from date of the award (May) through the due date of the final report (August). For example, the reporting period for a 2015 Level 3 awardee is May 2015 - August 2016.