

RESEARCH GRANTS COMMITTEE (RGC)

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTION MANUAL

FY 2017 CALL

LEVEL 1-RGC SEED PROJECT



Office of the Vice President for
Research & Economic Development

Table of Contents

Level 1 – RGC Seed Project.....	3
General Information about the RGC Awards Program	4
Application Due Date	4
Eligibility	4
Ineligible Applicants and Proposals	5
UA Research Policies	5
The Office for Research Compliance (ORC) Approvals	5
Technology Transfer	5
RGC Areas	6
Award Priorities	6
Review Criteria	6
Additional Information.....	7
Proposal Requirements.....	8
RGC Internal Coordination Sheet (ICS)	8
Proposal Narrative and References Cited	8
Budget.....	9
Budget Justification	9
Budget Preparation Information	9
Matching Funds	10
RGC Cost Sharing Authorization Form	11
Curriculum Vitae (CV)	11
Current and Pending (C&P) Support.....	11
Electronic Application Requirements/Instructions	12
Required Information.....	12
Instructions for Submitting the Application and Required Documents	12

Level 1 – RGC Seed Project

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial or Seed Research/Scholarship/Creative Scholarship Grant for UA faculty. Designed for projects that are new research programs, scholarly initiatives, or creative scholarship.
Award Period	1 to 2 years (5/15/17 – 5/14/19)
Proposal Funding Range	Project maximum of \$6,000
Cost Share Match	Match is voluntary
Faculty	Limited to 1 PI and 2 co-PIs**
College Participation Requirements	Open
Jr. Faculty Participation	Open
Expectations	<p>The applicant must describe how the award will (either):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further the research/scholarship mission of The University of Alabama and the faculty member, <u>and/or</u> Result in additional extramural support.
Required Deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Annual poster at Faculty Research Day or equivalent OVPRED sponsored event. Final report 90 days after the end of the award period. Failure to submit the final report will jeopardize future RGC funding.

** Additional faculty may be named as investigators or collaborators (without a leadership role in the project).

Applicants should review the entire RGC Level 1 Proposal Instruction Manual prior to preparing and submitting a proposal.

General Information about the RGC Awards Program

Purpose

Research Grants Committee (RGC) funds are intended to support scholarly activities for tenured, tenure track, clinical and clinical track faculty at the University of Alabama.

Depending on the award level, it is expected that the funding will produce a scholarly or creative product to heighten visibility and prominence of that program and/or lead to enhanced competitiveness for extramural funding.

Research Grants Committee Members

The Research Grants Committee is composed of faculty members, each appointed to a three-year term on a rotating basis from the ranks of full and associate professor and, in special circumstances, assistant professor. Membership also includes an appointed Faculty Senate Representative and liaison members from University administration. Click [here](#) for the list of current RGC members.

Research Grants Committee Office

The Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development (OVPRED) administers the RGC program through the Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP). Questions about the RGC program should be addressed to the RGC Coordinator (Angie Shotts, ashotts@research.ua.edu).

Application Due Date

The proposal submission window is **November 21 – December 19, 2016** for 2017 funding. All proposals must be submitted by **4:30 p.m. December 19, 2016**.

An RGC Application Form must be completed and submitted electronically. The electronic application is available on the [RGC Homepage](#). Applications must indicate the RGC Area for review and the Level of funding being requested. Information about the RGC Areas and funding Levels is provided in this manual and should be reviewed carefully prior to beginning the application process.

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.

Specific proposal requirements are included in this manual and should be followed carefully. Guidelines are, however, subject to change.

Ineligible Applicants and Proposals

- Non-compliant applications that do not follow all of the guidelines described in the RGC Manual will not be reviewed or considered for funding.
 - Adding additional materials and supplementary documents not listed as a component of the application will be considered a non-compliant submission. Non-compliant materials include, but are not limited to, support letters, appendices, and other documents not specified as a proposal requirement.
 - The inclusion of headers and footers in any proposal component is non-compliant with the RGC Proposal Instructional Manual. Page numbers, which are not required, are allowable in the footer.
 - The budget and budget justification are separate components and should not be combined into a single page.
 - The budget should clearly delineate the expenses covered by cost share match and the requested RGC funds. Budgets that do not clearly reflect the different funding sources will be considered non-compliant. See the [Budget](#) section of this manual for additional details.
- Submissions with incorrect or incomplete online applications will be considered non-compliant.
- 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 and the RGC award start date.

UA Research Policies

The Office for Research Compliance (ORC) Approvals

All research proposals involving human subjects, animals, controlled substances, radioactive materials, or recombinant DNA must have approval by the appropriate University Committee in order to ensure compliance with existing regulations.

Awardees must obtain approval from ORC before RGC funds are released. The approval number and expiration date must be shared with the RGC Coordinator before an award fund will be established. Awardees are responsible for updating the RGC Coordinator annually when the approvals from the Office for Research Compliance (ORC) expire.

To ensure timely processing and establishment of awards:

- Applicants should ensure the title of the RGC project and the project title submitted to the Office for Research Compliance are exactly the same.
- UA RGC 2017 should be listed as a potential source of funding in the submitted protocol/paperwork and may be used as the internal proposal number.
- Go to the [Office for Research Compliance](#) website for further information.

Technology Transfer

All award recipients must abide by the requirements concerning any patentable invention, process, design, or improvement set forth in the University Patent Policy, please see the [Office for Technology Transfer](#) website for further information.

RGC Areas

The Area selected should be determined by the proposed research or project, which may be different than the faculty member's appointment. If you are unsure about which Area should receive your application package, please work with your [Associate Dean for Research](#) or the RGC Coordinator. The type of research proposed may fit within a traditional discipline or may be interdisciplinary. Each applicant should identify the Area most appropriate to evaluate the proposal. For disciplines such as history and linguistics, in which the research methodology may be oriented either toward the humanities or toward the social sciences, we ask that the applicant identify the Area most appropriate to evaluate the proposal. The following is a list of **some** of the disciplines and types of research within each of the three Areas:

<p>Area A- Physical and Biological Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering: biology, chemistry, computer science, education, engineering, environmental science, geography, geology, human environmental sciences, marine science, nursing, physics, psychology, exercise science, human performance.</p>	<p>Area B- Social and Behavioral Sciences: advertising, American studies, anthropology, communicative disorders, communication, criminal justice, economics, education, finance, geography, history, human environmental sciences, information systems, international studies, journalism, law, management, marketing, nursing, philosophy, political science, public relations, psychology, social work, telecommunications/film.</p>	<p>Area C- Arts and Humanities: American studies, art, communication, dance, education, English, modern languages and classics, history, international studies, journalism, law, music, philosophy, political science, public relations, religious studies, telecommunications/film, theatre.</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Award Priorities

All University of Alabama full-time tenured, tenure track, clinical, and clinical track faculty working individually or jointly may apply for RGC funding. The RGC funds are limited; therefore tenure/clinical track and tenured faculty are reviewed separately in the award process for Level 1 proposals.

Level 1 – RGC Seed Project Priority:

- The highest priority is given to Level 1 proposals with PIs who are tenure track or clinical track faculty and are not currently funded by external (non-UA) awards.
- The second highest priority is for tenure track or clinical track faculty with significant research funding unrelated to the research proposed in the RGC application.

Review Criteria

Need:

- Novelty, rationale, and/or significance of the project including a needs assessment when appropriate.

Response:

- Project's research methods, design, and plan of work or the creative production.
- Feasibility of the proposed timeline.

Evaluative Measures:

- Anticipated outcome(s), products, and dissemination that include a direct reference to the required Deliverables for the requested Level of funding.
- When applicable, the plans to use the outcomes of the RGC award to apply for external funding.

Impact:

- Outline for further development of applicant's research, scholarship, or creative endeavor.
- Significance of the project to the applicant's particular field.

Resources/Capabilities:

- Appropriateness of the resources utilized and capacity of the applicant(s) to effectively implement the proposed activities.
- Acknowledgement of potential obstacles and the strategy to effectively resolve potential challenges.

Support Requested:

- Appropriateness of the budget and budget justification.

Match:

- Availability of school, college, or departmental matching support.

Additional Information**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 cancelled 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 approved by the VPRED.
- No-cost extensions for extraordinary circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the VPRED.
- 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 VPRED which includes an accounting of all expended and remaining funds 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 must be approved by the VPRED.

Proposal Requirements

The submitted proposal package must include the following components. All components must be combined into a single pdf file and follow the guidelines described in this manual. Additional information in section [V. Ineligible Applicants and Proposals](#) should be reviewed.

The formatting for the file name should be as follows, including the capitalization:

- PIIlastPIfirst2017AreaXLevelX
- Example: **SmithAnna2017AreaALevel1**

1. RGC Internal Coordination Sheet (ICS) with all signatures.
2. Proposal Narrative and References Cited, including applicant remarks to RGC previous reviews if applicable (page limitation is determined by the Level of the application).
3. Budget (2 page limit).
4. Budget Justification (2 page limit).
5. RGC Cost Sharing Authorization form(s) (if applicable).
6. Curriculum Vitae (CV) for the PI and co-PIs (limit of 5 pages per CV).
7. Current and Pending (C&P) for the PI and co-PIs (no page limit, **always required**, see details in Current and Pending section).

While you are not required to submit a Data Management Plan, if applicable, you may want to include a brief description of your plan within the Proposal Narrative. For more information and assistance in development of data management plans, please go to <http://www.lib.ua.edu/e-sci>.

RGC Internal Coordination Sheet (ICS)

The RGC ICS is available on the [RGC Website](#) in the “Application” information box. The RGC ICS must be complete, accurate, and have all required signatures. The PI and all co-PIs must sign the form and determine the Shared Credit per person. Shared Credit percentages are used to reflect the proposal amount reflected in Faculty Activity Report (FAR). Single PIs should enter their Shared Credit as 100. All signatures are also required from the PI and co-PIs’ Deans, Department Heads and Associate Deans for Research. Applications that do not include the ICS with all the required signatures and information will be considered non-compliant and not reviewed.

The ICS may be handwritten.

Proposal Narrative and References Cited

Previous applicants may include an additional one (1) page response to the RGC reviewer comments. This component of the proposal should follow the proposal narrative formatting guidelines and should be included before the proposal narrative.

Level 1 formatting: five (5) pages or less, double-spaced with 12-point font and 1 inch margins. Additional pages (unlimited) are allowed for references cited.

Headers and footers should not be added. Page numbers, however, are allowed but not required. Proposals that do not adhere to the formatting requirements will not be considered for funding.

The Proposal Narrative must be **written in clear, non-technical language that may be understood by a layperson**. The reviewers come from varied backgrounds and disciplines and may not be familiar with technical language or terminology specific to your discipline.

Proposal Narrative Components

The proposal narrative should include and sufficiently address the following elements:

- a) **Abstract:** one-fourth to one-half page overview of the project. The Abstract, also written in layperson's terms, should briefly address the significance and purpose of the proposal for the reviewers.
- b) **Purpose/Objectives:** rationale for the proposed research.
- c) **Significance of the Project:** both as the project apply to the applicant's particular field of study/inquiry and to the applicant's career. Tenured faculty should explain within the text of the proposal why the project represents a new direction within the overall theme of their research area and how they envision future development of this new direction or why funding is needed to continue research for a previously funded area.
- d) **Research methods/design/plan of work or creative production.**
- e) **Outcomes:** anticipated outcome(s), products, and dissemination that include a direct reference to the required deliverables for the requested Level of funding. If applicable, plans to use the outcomes of your RGC award to apply for external funding should be included.
- f) **Timeline:** a realistic timeline or incremental plan indicating when each portion of the research will be completed.
- g) **References Cited:** The reference pages may be single or double spaced. There is not a page limit for references cited.

Budget

The **RGC Budget** is created by the applicant and has a two (2) page limit. There are not margin limits for the budget pages. Margins may be adjusted to accommodate and improve the budget presentation to the review committee.

The budget should reflect (by line item and year) the funds being requested from the OVPRED and the match that is being provided by the applicable Colleges/Schools/Departments.

Faculty are encouraged to contact Carol Hollyhand, Office for Sponsored Programs Associate Director, at chollyhand@research.ua.edu for individual assistance with their RGC budget.

Example budgets that applicants may edit are available on the [RGC website](#).

Budget Justification

The **budget justification** is limited to two (2) pages. The justification for the requested and matching funds is part of the review criteria and should be carefully articulated. The budget justification may be single or double spaced with a 12-point font and 1-inch margins.

The budget justification should reflect (by line item and year) the funds being requested from the OVPRED and the match that is being provided by the applicable Colleges/Schools/Departments. Clear delineation between the different school/college/department matching funds is required.

Budget Preparation Information

- a) **Salaries:**
 - i. Faculty salary requests may not be for salary during the academic year or for 12 month salary.
 - ii. Supplemental Pay – The RGC funds will comply with the [UA Supplemental Pay Policy](#).
 - RGC funds may not be used for supplemental pay other than one month of summer salary for 9 month faculty (see iii., below).
 - RGC funds may not be used to add to or increase the salary of 12-month employees.
 - iii. Summer Salary is compensation; therefore tax and other payroll withholdings will be applied to any payments. Salary requested cannot be higher than the current monthly salary rate of the faculty member. Requests for years 2 and 3 of an award may reflect a cost of living increase estimate. See [Budget Procedures for Grants and Contracts](#) for additional policy guidance.

- To assist the review panel, requests for faculty summer salary must have a clear and strong justification explaining the why the work cannot be completed during the academic year and additional salary is necessary to complete the project.
- iv. UA Faculty Serving as Consultants - If requesting funding for a consultant who is a UA faculty member, the funds requested should be reflected in the "Salary" section of the budget. A related amount must also be budgeted for fringe benefits. For the current fringe benefit rate and guidance on how to calculate, go to: <http://osp.ua.edu/fringe.html>. The funds requested should be for summer activity and, therefore, summer salary.
 - b) **Conference Expenses:** RGC funds may be used for conference expenses for one (1) person to attend one (1) conference during the award period. Conference attendance is for presenting the outcomes of the RGC project and must be directly related to the RGC funding level Deliverables.
 - c) **Other Travel Expenses:** If using RGC funding for travel, the University's policies for in-state, out-of-state, or foreign travel must be used. For more information go to <http://accountspayable.ua.edu/policies-references/>. Transportation costs are based on the most economical means of travel for one person. If foreign travel is requested, a justification must be included that clearly describes how the foreign travel will benefit the research project.
 - d) **Research Assistants:** Students hired to work on an RGC project must be enrolled as a student at the University. The RGC budget may include salary, in-state tuition, and the appropriate fringe/health insurance (if applicable) for undergraduate, graduate and post-doc students. GRA funding should reflect the appropriate expenses for the time the student is involved in the project: in-state tuition, health insurance and salary. The cost difference between in-state and out of state tuition will be the responsibility of the school or college and may not be reflected in the required match in the RGC budget. Current GRA rates for in-state tuition, minimum salary, etc. are available on the [OSP Proposal Preparation](#) site. Hourly student workers, both undergraduate and graduate, are also allowable expenses in the RGC budget.
 - e) **Equipment:** Any item having a unit cost of \$5,000 or more and a useful life of one year or more is considered Equipment. See the Budget Procedures for Grants and Contracts on the [OSP Proposal Preparation](#) site for additional information. RGC funds should not be used to purchase equipment that would normally be purchased by the applicant's Department, School, or College. Equipment purchased for Level 1 (RGC Seed Project) awards may be kept in the department or unit as long as the PI/co-PI is a member of the University faculty. All equipment must be inventoried through University Property and Inventory Management policy and procedures (<http://fawp.ua.edu/surplus/surplus-property-2/>). Proposals that include the purchase of equipment should include an Equipment Sharing Plan as a component of the proposal narrative.
 - f) **Consultants:** If a consultant is not an employee of UA, consultant fees should be reflected in "Operating Expenses." See a) iv., above, for UA faculty serving as consultants.

Matching Funds

The RGC is an internally funded program. In order to ensure the best use of and highest impact from the University's resources, it is important for the recipient Colleges/Schools/Departments to be invested in the RGC supported projects. A match of at least 1:1 is recommended though not required for all RGC funding Levels and should be in the form of "cash" such as a new GRA's salary and in-state tuition, equipment and travel. Faculty salary will not be accepted as match. Faculty salary of up to one month total, per individual, per year may be charged to a Level 1 or 2 project. Availability of matching funds will be taken into consideration during the review process.

Matching may be funded from college, school, departmental, gift, or research overhead funds.

Matching funds may not come from:

- Existing internal or external grants
- Faculty salary
- Staff permanently budgeted salary
- Faculty start-up funds
- Outside entities or collaborators

Unlike externally funded projects, there is no internal funding mechanism to cover the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition. Should an out-of-state resident GRA be included on the project, only the in-state tuition is allowable as a grant charge and/or match and the out-of-state portion must be funded from other School/College or Department resources.

RGC Cost Sharing Authorization Form

A completed RGC Cost Sharing Authorization Form is required for all RGC applications with cost-share match. The RGC Cost Sharing Authorization Form, located on the [RGC website](#), should indicate all of the individual Colleges/Schools/Departments contributions to the match.

Different RGC Cost Sharing Authorization forms may be used for different schools/colleges to reflect cost share matches for multidisciplinary proposals. However, the PI should ensure that the total match is accurate if multiple Cost Sharing Authorization forms are included in the RGC application. Before submitting the proposal, the RGC Cost Sharing Authorization form must have:

- The FOAP number(s)
- All required authorizing signatures

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A current CV for the PI and the co-PIs, if applicable, is required. There is a **five (5) page limit** for each CV. The CV(s) may be single or double spaced in a 12-point font and 1-inch margins and uploaded to the application as a single document. The NSF and NIH Biosketch formats are acceptable, but not required.

Current and Pending (C&P) Support

A Current and Pending document for the PI and co-PIs is required. The C&Ps may be single or double spaced but must be in 12-point font with 1-inch margin. There is not a page limit for the C&Ps. **If there are not any current and pending submissions or awards to report, a document with the heading "Current and Pending" that indicates "N/A" is required.** If a C&P is not included for the PI and each of the co-PIs, the submission will be considered non-compliant.

The C&P must include both internal and external submissions and awards from the past three years. Pre-proposal submissions should also be included. Competitive internal (UA) awards, including department awards in which you submitted an application, should be included in the C&P. **However, departmental start-up funds should not be listed.** The Current and Pending document should reflect all research projects, including those not related to the proposed RGC project, **from the past three (3) years.** Awards that have ended during this time period may be included but are not required. The Current and Pending should contain the following details:

- a) Funding agency.
- b) Title of award.
- c) PI and co-PI as listed in the proposal.
- d) Total period of award.
- e) Total amount of the award. (May reflect the individual's and/or total amount.)
- f) Amount of the award for the current award year if it is a multi-year award.
- g) Status of the proposal: awarded or pending.
- h) For pending proposals, indicate if there is duplication of the project proposed to the RGC.

It is required that all other funding sources be disclosed. Failure to disclose all current and pending funding may result in the committee rejecting the application or a later withdrawal of the award by the OVPRED. Start-up funds are not considered grant support and should not be included on the list of current and pending support. Previous RGC awards are considered internal grant support and should be listed.

Electronic Application Requirements/Instructions

The Research Grants Committee (RGC) electronic application must be filled out completely.

Do not use all caps to answer any fields in the electronic application.

The link to the RGC online application, example budgets, and additional resources are available on the [RGC website](#).

Required Information

Data entered into online form:

- a) Personal Data for all PIs and co-PIs: CWIDs, the UA campus box number, UA email address, phone number, departmental accounting contact (PI only), and past RGC funding history.
- b) Area of Application: Area A, Area B, or Area C.
- c) Level of Funding requested.
- d) Shared Credit: The PI and co-PIs should determine how the shared credit for the proposal will be divided, specifically on the UA Faculty Activity Report (FAR). Shared Credit distribution is used to determine the amount of the total award that is credited to each faculty member. Shared Credit must equal 100%.
- e) Office for Research Compliance information: this section includes questions concerning the project's need for Compliance approvals.
- f) Documents must be uploaded as single pdf and named in the correct format: PIlastPIfirst2017AreaXLevelX. Example: **SmithAnna2017AreaALevel3**.
 - i. RGC Internal Coordination Sheet Proposal (ICS) with all signatures.
 - ii. Proposal Narrative (5 page limit) and References Cited (no page limit). When applicable, the one (1) page response to previous RGC reviewer comments is included as the first page of this section.
 - iii. RGC Budget (2 page limit).
 - iv. Budget Justification document (2 page limit).
 - v. Cost Sharing Authorization form(s) if applicable.
 - vi. Curriculum Vitae document(s) for PI and co-PI(s) (5 page limit per CV).
 - vii. Current and Pending document(s) for PI and co-PI(s) (no page limit).

Instructions for Submitting the Application and Required Documents

Open the form and enter all the required information ensuring that all sections are completely filled out. This will include uploading the required attachment in the format described above. When the application is completed, click the "Submit" button. You will then be directed to a page that displays a summary of the information you entered into the application. **Please review your data and then click "Submit" for the second time.**

Once you have clicked "Submit" on the summary page, a Thank You page will appear. This ensures your submission has been delivered.

You will receive a confirmation email that includes the information in your proposal.

- **Keep this email for your records.**
- **Forward the email to all co-PIs on the proposal.**

If you have any problems with any steps in the RGC application process, please contact the RGC Coordinator, Angie Shotts at ashotts@research.ua.edu.