University of Alabama

Research Grants Committee Manual/Application Package January 2014

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General Information about the Research Grants Committee (RGC)

History
A Research Fund Committee was established in 1938 by President Foster and continued until 1943. The University Research Committee was organized in 1943 when the State Legislature set up a fund for "Research" and "Extension" programs. In the fall of 1969, the name was changed to the Research Grants Committee. In the fall of 1996, the name was changed to the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and, in 2006; it was changed back to the Research Grants Committee.

Purpose
RGC funds are intended to support scholarly activities for tenured, tenure track and clinical faculty.   It is expected that the funding will produce a scholarly product and that this product will allow the researcher to seek additional funding from external sources to support future scholarly activity. The review process and awards will be divided between non-tenured, tenure track faculty and tenured faculty. Proposals from tenured faculty, who are currently unfunded and are proposing to restart their funding or moving into a new area of research, will be awarded from funds specified for tenured faculty.

Research Grants Committee Members
The Research Grants Committee is composed of faculty members appointed to a three-year term on a rotating basis from the ranks of professor or associate professor and, in special circumstances, assistant professor in non-administrative capacities. There is an appointed Faculty Senate Representative and four RGC liaison members. See http://www.committees.ua.edu/research-grants-committee.html for the list of current RGC members. The RGC Committee is divided into three separate discipline areas: **Area A**, Physical and Biological Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering, **Area B**, Social and Behavioral Sciences, and **Area C,** Arts and Humanities. The Office of the Vice President for Research in consultation with the Provost appoints a chairperson for each discipline area.

Research Grants Committee Office
The Office of the Vice President for Research administers the RGC program. RGC application forms are on-line and can be accessed through the RGC link on the Research website at: www.ua.edu/research.html. Completed RGC applications must be electronically submitted to the RGC and the applicant must select an Area (A, B or C) that is most appropriate for the proposed research, which may be different than the faculty member's appointment.

The RGC Application Process

Deadline for filing applications is January 31 of each calendar year. *If the deadline falls on a weekend, the applications and proposals will be due by close of business on the following Monday.*

An RGC Application Form must be completed and submitted electronically via the RGC website to Area A, B, or C. **The Area selected should be determined by the proposed research or project, which may be different than the faculty member's appointment.** If unsure about which area should receive your application package, please contact Angie Shotts at ashotts@fa.ua.edu or Lauren Wilson at lawilson@fa.ua.edu. A notice of the submission must also be sent to the appropriate department head or Associate Dean for Research by the faculty member. All applications must be received on or before the deadline. No application will be accepted after the deadline. Staff from the Office for Sponsored Programs will be available to answer questions or help with submissions until 5:00 p.m. on the due date. However, the electronic submissions will be accepted until 11:59pm on the due date.

Applicants will be notified of proposal award or denial by campus mail the first week of April each year with funds available on May 15th.

Amount of Available Funding

An applicant may apply for funding in an amount up to $6,000.   The appropriateness of the budget to the research proposed is one of the criteria for evaluation of the proposal. ***Budgets that are over $6,000 will not be considered by the committees.***

All full-time tenured, tenure track and clinical faculty of the University campus, working individually or jointly may apply for RGC funding. However, since research funds are limited, the RGC has found it necessary and desirable to separate tenure track and tenured faculty in the review and award process.
   a. In a spirit of support and collegiality, the RGC will give highest priority to proposals from non-tenured tenure track faculty who are currently unfunded with external (non-UA) awards and will award funding to those proposals deemed meritorious.
   b. The second highest priority is for non-tenured faculty with significant research funding unrelated to the research proposed in the RGC application.

c. Tenured/Clinical faculty with established records of productivity, *who are currently unfunded and proposing to restart their funding or exploring a new direction in their research area*. Faculty should explain within the text of the proposal why the project for which they are requesting funds is needed to continue research in a previously funded area or how the proposal represents a new direction within the overall theme of their research area and how they envision future development of this new direction. A portion of the total funds allocated for RGC awards will be designated for tenured faculty.

Only one proposal 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). RGC grants are for a two-year (24 month) funding cycle. Applicants are allowed to receive only one RGC award during the 24 month funding cycle. Example: If the applicant received a RGC award in May 2010, they would not be eligible to submit to the RGC again until January 2012. To be eligible to submit an application in January 2012, the applicant must have completed the 2010 award and submitted a final report prior to their submission of the new proposal.

All faculty previously funded by the RGC must have completed a final report detailing the results of their previous RGC funded project. **The final report must be on file with the Office for Sponsored Programs prior to submission of a new RGC application** and it must include a copy of a publication, grant application, exhibit, presentation or performance that resulted from the previous RGC funding.

Compliance/IRB and Technology Transfer
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. Grantees must obtain approval before RGC funds are released. Please see the Research Compliance website for further information: http://osp.ua.edu/Research_compliance.html

All award recipients must abide by the regulations concerning any patentable invention, process, design, or improvement set forth in the University Patent Policy, please see the Technology Transfer Office website for further information: http://ott.ua.edu.

Ineligible Applicants/Conditions
a. Applications cannot be accepted from visiting, acting, temporary, or emeritus faculty; organized research bureaus, committees, outside agencies or employees thereof.

b. RGC awards may not be used to support applicant thesis or dissertation research.
c. Applicants who have an active RGC project are ineligible.
d. Applicants who have not submitted a final report for previous RGC funding are ineligible.
e. RGC Committee members may not submit an RGC application.
f. Applicants who do not properly disclose other funding sources, both current and pending.
g. If a faculty member receives an award and then leaves The University of Alabama (UA) before the award's start date, he/she 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 Office for Research. The PI is responsible for notifying the Office for Research that he/she is leaving UA and must provide an approximate date of termination. Funds spent after that date will not be paid by the grant. Funds are not transferable to another university or a new project director. Funds will not pay for charges occurring prior to the project start date.

Additional Information

a. RGC funds may not be used to add or increase salary for 12 month employees.
b. Equipment purchased with RGC funds will be kept in the custody of the department. The department will determine if others may have access to the equipment during and after the award period.
c. A faculty member may have an active RGC award during sabbatical.
d. RGC funds may be used to supplement funds that are not Sponsored Programs, such as awards received directly by the faculty member or departmental funds.
e. Summer salary for faculty may be an appropriate request and will be considered and reviewed based on the RGC evaluation criteria. The faculty's activities and need for summer salary should be clearly described for the review committee.
f. Support letters are not required for the RGC application and may not be included in the proposal.
g. Start-up funds and departmental awards may be referenced in the program narrative if the RGC funds are being requested to supplement these funds. Start-up funds should not be listed on the Current and Pending. Departmental awards should be listed only when an application has been submitted.
h. If a proposal has a PI and a Co-PI, the proposal will be evaluated by the status of the PI. For example, if the PI is tenure track, the review committee will consider the proposal with the other submissions from tenure track faculty.
i. While you are not required to submit a plan for management of project data, 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.

<u>Evaluation Criteria</u>
   a. Objectives and merits: The quality of the proposal presentation is
      determined by how clearly the conceptual framework, design,
      methods, and analyses are developed, well-reasoned and appropriate
      to the aims of the project.
   b. Outcomes: Will the project result in a publication, exhibit, artistic
      performance, or grant application? The expected outcomes from the
      RGC funds should be detailed in the application. <u>If applicable, plans to
      use the results from the RGC funds to apply for external funding
      should be explained fully and will be strongly considered when making
      funding decisions between closely ranked proposals.</u>
   c. Budget: Is the proposed budget reasonable for the objectives of the
      project? Is there a well-documented and clear budget justification?
   d. Prior Review: Prior review of the proposals and application packages
      are not required. However, to improve grantsmanship and overall
      quality of RGC applications, the RGC Committee strongly recommends
      and encourages applicants to have their complete application package
      reviewed by a faculty mentor or department chairperson.

<u>Project Completion/Termination</u>
An RGC grant may be cancelled in whole or in part if the Grantee makes
material changes such as changes in employment status, changes in project
plans as to location or time available for the project, or receipt of other grant
support for the same project.
   a. The project may continue for a period of 24 months, however funds not
      used within 24 months of the approval date will automatically be
      returned to the RGC fund.
   b. Unused funds are automatically canceled upon termination of the
      project or resignation of the PI and must be returned to the Office of
      the Vice President for Research.
   c. No-cost extensions for extraordinary circumstances and exceptional
      situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any request for
      a no-cost extension must be submitted to the Office of the Vice
      President for Research and must include a justification and time period
      for completion of the project.
   d. If there is a change in the project which differs materially from the
      objectives as stated in the original application, all such changes must
      be reported, in writing, to the Vice President for Research.
   e. Should a recipient abandon the project, the recipient must inform and
      send a summary report to the Office of the Vice President for Research,
      along with an accounting of funds expended and remaining.

Resignation from the University

If the Grantee leaves the University before completing the project, the following must be filed with the Office of the Vice President for Research:

   a. Statement of resignation with its effective date.
   b. Contact information upon resignation from the University, including address, phone number and email address.
   c. Full and complete report of progress to date.
   d. Report of condition and location of any equipment purchased with RGC funds.
   e. Accounting of funds expended on the project and amount remaining. (Unused funds are automatically cancelled as of the effective date of resignation or release).

Proposal Requirements

The total package to be submitted for review includes the following components: (1) Proposal Narrative and References Cited, (2) Budget, (3) curriculum vitae (CV) for the PI and Co-PI if applicable, (4) List of external grant support from the past three years.

All components are required to be submitted to ensure review by the appropriate committee. All required attachments will be uploaded on page two (2) of the electronic application and must be PDF format.

Proposal Narrative and References Cited

The Proposal Narrative should be written in clear, non-technical language. The reviewers come from varied backgrounds and disciplines and may not be familiar with technically specialized language or terminology. The narrative is limited to five (5) pages of narrative with one page for references cited for a total of six (6) pages, if applicable. The narrative must include an abstract and be **double spaced using 12 point font with one (1) inch margins**. Adherence to font, margin and page limit requirements is necessary for several reasons. Page six (6) of the Proposal Narrative (which may be single or double spaced) may only include cited references. If references are not cited in your proposal, the attachment may only be five (5) pages. No applicant should have an advantage over other applicants by providing more content in his/her application by using smaller, denser type. Proposals that exceed the five page narrative limit ***will not*** be considered for funding. Please run a spell and grammar check on this document before submitting for review.

Proposal Narrative Elements

   a. Abstract: one-fourth to one-half page overview of the project. The Abstract, also written in layman's terms, should briefly address the significance and purpose of the proposal for the reviewers.
   b. Purpose/Objectives: rationale for the proposed research.

c. <u>Significance of the Project:</u> both as the project applies 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. <u>Research methods/design/plan of work</u>
e. <u>Outcomes:</u> anticipated outcome(s), products, and dissemination. <u>If applicable, plans to use the outcomes of your RGC award to apply for external funding should be included.</u>
f. <u>Timeline:</u> a realistic timeline or incremental plan indicating when each portion of the research will be completed.
g. <u>References Cited:</u> When references are cited within the proposal narrative, this attachment may have six (6) pages to list the references on the last page. The reference page may be single or double spaced. The proposal narrative may not exceed five (5) pages.

Budget and Budget Justification
The budget justification (limited to one (1) page) is part of the review criteria and should be carefully articulated. The budget justification may be single or double spaced with 12 point font and 1 inch margins. Your budget justification is considered by the review committee.

After committee review, budgets may be adjusted, which upon award may require re-submission of a budget by the PI for the amount actually awarded (this is typically a lower amount than requested). Applicants will be notified prior to the award announcement if a budget will need adjustment based on the actual award amount for the submitted project.

The form for the detailed budget is located on page three (3) of the electronic application.

Example RGC proposal budgets are included on page fourteen (14) of this manual. For guidance and assistance in the development of your RGC budget you may contact Angie Shotts at ashotts@fa.ua.edu.

<u>Budget Information</u>
a. Summer salary support is available for recipients who wish to devote time to research during the summer. Summer salary is compensation; therefore tax and other payroll withholdings will be applied to any payments. For an example of how this <u>may</u> be reflected on a PI's paycheck go to page fifteen (15) of this manual. This example is to demonstrate that the amount of salary proposed

may not equal the amount reflected on the PI's paycheck due to personal withholdings.

b. If requesting funding for salary, a related amount must also be budgeted for fringe benefits. For the current fringe benefit rate and how to calculate, go to: http://osp.ua.edu/fringe.html.

c. Your budget justification should explain to the review committee the need for PI salary, especially when it is summer salary. It is also recommended that your budget justification give additional explanation that may assist the review committee, such as an explanation as to why summer funding is delayed until the second year of the project.

d. Salary requested and the associated fringe does NOT need to reflect person-time, only the amount of salary and fringe requested.

e. Travel Allowance: If using RGC funding for travel, the University's per diem allowance for in-state, out-of-state or foreign travel must be used. For more information go to the following link: http://accountspayable.ua.edu/pages/policies.html. Transportation costs are based on the most economical means of travel for one person. If foreign travel is requested, a justification must be included clearly articulating how the foreign travel benefits the research project.
RGC funding is not intended to support travel to professional meetings to present the results of scholarly activities.

f. Research Assistants: There are no restrictions on the expenditures for research assistants; however, an award recipient may not hire a student to work on their project who is not enrolled as a student at the University.

g. Equipment: RGC funds should not be used to purchase equipment that would normally be purchased by the applicant's Department or College. Equipment requisitioned by the Grantee may be kept in his/her custody or for use in the department or unit as long as they are members of the University faculty. All equipment must be inventoried through University procedures. Equipment purchased with RGC funds will be kept in the custody of the department. The department will determine if others may have access to the equipment during and after the award period. Upon leaving the University, the grantee must leave equipment purchased with RGC funds with his/her department.

h. Consultants: RGC funds may be used for consultants and may be reflected in the "Operating Expenses" or "Salary" section of the budget in the electronic application. If the consultant is a UA faculty member, the consultant's work must be conducted during the summer and considered summer salary. RGC funds may not be used for supplemental pay. To view the supplemental pay policy, please go to: http://osp.ua.edu/policy_procedures.html. The total budgeted must also reflect the appropriate amount of fringe for any

UA faculty who will be providing consulting services for the proposed project.

<u>Curriculum Vitae (CV)</u>
A current CV for the PI and the Co-PI if applicable. There is a five (5) page limit to the CV, which may be single or double spaced with 12 point font and 1 inch margins. The NSF Biosketch format is acceptable, but not required.

<u>Current and Pending Support</u>
A Current and Pending document is required and may be single or double spaced with 12 point font and 1 inch margins. There is not a page limit for this attachment. If there are not any current and pending awards to report, an attachment indicating "N/A" is required.

You 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 your Current and Pending. However, departmental start-up funds should <u>not</u> 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**. You may indicate awards that have ended during this time period. 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.
   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.

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. 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. There is not a page limit for the Current and Pending information.

Electronic Application Requirements

The Research Grants Committee (RGC) electronic application contains seven sections that must be filled out completely. Please do not use all caps for names and/or the project title.

a. **Personal Data:** Please be specific on office addresses (using your campus box number), phone numbers and email addresses so any questions or correspondence regarding your submission will be received by you in a prompt manner.

b. **Area of Application:** Area A, Area B, or Area C which should be determined based on the nature of the proposal, not the faculty member's appointment. If there is a question as to which area to submit the proposal, please contact Angie Shotts at ashotts@fa.ua.edu, or Lauren Wilson at lawilson@fa.ua.edu.

c. **Curriculum Vitae:** limited to 5 pages. The NSF Biosketch format is acceptable, but not required.

d. A concise project narrative including an abstract in non-technical terms should be included to ensure better understanding by the committee members unfamiliar with the field. This must be attached and uploaded, please remember to run a spell and grammar check on the document. (Not to exceed 5 pages). The project narrative must begin with an Abstract, which is included in the 5 page limit. An additional page (page 6) may be included to cite references from the narrative, when applicable.

e. A list of current and pending grant support within the past three years which should contain the following details:

   1. Funding agency.
   2. Title of award.
   3. PI and Co-PI as listed in the proposal.
   4. Total period of award.
   5. Total amount of the award.
   6. Amount of the award for the current award year if it is a multi-year award.
   7. Status of the proposal: awarded or pending.

f. **Budget:** The detailed budget form is located on page three (3) of the electronic application. For guidance and assistance in the development of your RGC budget you may contact Angie Shotts at ashotts@fa.ua.edu. Summer salary support is available for recipients who wish to devote time to research during the summer. Summer salary is compensation; therefore tax and other payroll withholdings will be applied to any payments.

If requesting funding for salary, a related amount must also be budgeted for fringe benefits. For the current fringe benefit rates and how to calculate the amount, go to: http://osp.ua.edu/fringe.html.

The link to the RGC Application Form is available on the Research Grants Committee website: http://osp.ua.edu/rgc_grants.html.

Instructions for Submitting the Application and Required Documents
Open the form and make sure that all sections are completely filled out including uploading all attachments. Once 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."

Once you have clicked "Submit", a Thank You page will appear. This ensures your submission has been delivered to the appropriate committee. You will also receive a confirmation email that has a link the completed application and a copy of your attachments. Please keep this email for your records. *At this time, you may forward this email to your Department Head and/or Associate Dean for Research informing them of your submission.*

If you have any problems with any step of the RGC application process, please contact Angie Shotts, ashotts@fa.ua.edu or Lauren Wilson, lawilson@fa.ua.edu.

RGC Timeline with example years

January 31, 2013	RGC proposal are due by 11:59 p.m.
April 1-7, 2013	Award/denial letters are sent to applicants from the Vice President for Research through intercampus mail.
May 15, 2013	RGC fund numbers are available for expenditures assuming the following conditions have been met: • The Award Conditions, with required signatures, has been return to the Office for Sponsored Programs. • All required IRB, IACUC, export control, hazardous materials, etc. have received the appropriate approvals and the approval number has been share with the Office for Sponsored Programs RGC contacts.
May 14, 2015	The 24 month period for the award and the associated fund number end.
August 12, 2015	All final reports are due. Final reports must be submitted to the Office for Sponsored Programs for review by the Vice President for Research.

RGC Budget Examples

RGC Example One - all funds requested for PI Salary				
Personnel				
Name		**Salary requested**	**Fringe**	**Totals**
PI name		4545	1455	6000
Total Requested				6000

RGC ExampleTwo - multiple line items				
Personnel				
Name		**Salary requested**	**Fringe**	**Totals**
PI name		2864	916	3780
Operating Expenses (Books, Supplies, etc.)				
Respondent payments				1500
postage				300
Travel Expenses				
mileage for interviews				220
Total Requested				5800

RGC Example Three - PI & Co-PI				
Personnel				
Name		**Salary requested**	**Fringe**	**Totals**
PI name		1970	630	2600
Co-PI name		1970	630	2600
Operating Expenses (Books, Supplies, etc.)				
software				800
Total Requested				6000

RGC Example Four - Student workers				
Personnel				
Name		**Salary requested**	**Fringe***	**Totals**
GRA - summer		4642	358	5000
UG worker		1000	0	1000
Total Requested				6000
*7.7% fringe is required for GRA summer salary when the GRA is not enrolled in classes				

Example of Summer Salary Paycheck

Initial amount	2,500.00	
Less fringe benefit rate 32%*	(800.00)	
Gross payroll amount	1,700.00	
Less payroll deductions:		
Federal income tax 25% supplemental rate	(425.00)	
State income tax 5%	(85.00)	
FICA/Medicare tax 7.65%	(130.05)	
State Teachers Retirement 5%	(85.00)	
Net check amount	974.95	
Percentage of initial amount	39%	
* Fringe benefit rate includes the following costs		
that UA bears as the employer:		
employer's portion of FICA/Medicare tax		
employer's portion of BC/BS medical insurance		
STRS UA Match		
unemployment Insurance		
Life/Acc. Insurance		
LT Disability Insurance		
AD&D Insurance		