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# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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## Research Development Committee

### Small Grant Application Guidelines & Instructions

#### ***IMPORTANT ITEMS this year***

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1. **Small Grant awards have been increased to \$2,000.** Applications that exceed this by any amount will not be considered.
2. Check the RDC website for submission deadlines. Remember that electronic forms are due at the first deadline, then signed routed paper forms are due one week later hand-delivered to the ORSPA office (432 Ross Hall).
3. After the deadlines, applications will be scored as either:  
1 – Exceptional; 2 – Good; or 3 – Unsatisfactory. Using average scores of multiple reviews, applications will be ranked, then applicants will be informed of their outcome.
4. In order to distribute RDC funds as widely as possible, any investigator with a **CURRENT** Major Grant award for FY2019 may **NOT** submit a Small Grant application as either PI or Co-Investigator.
5. Applicants may request budget items that have *Special Emphasis*:
  - a. Publication costs for tenure-track faculty, or
  - b. Summer travel across the fiscal year deadline.Please see *Section I. Purpose*.
6. Submission is through an online system. Please see *Section III. Form Access*. Please use up-to-date web browser software such as Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome or Mac Safari. *Try a test form at [https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc\\_grant\\_application\\_test](https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc_grant_application_test)*
7. The RDC has an email address: [RDC@etsu.edu](mailto:RDC@etsu.edu) Please use this address whenever possible.



## **I. PURPOSE**

The Research Development Committee (RDC) is responsible for distribution of internal funds to support research. These funds are administered through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration (ORSPA) on behalf of the RDC. The RDC approves budgetary allocation of the funds available for the fiscal year, evaluates grant applications, and selects those to be supported. Small Research Grants are intended to support and encourage research which is broadly interpreted as scholarship in both the sciences and non-sciences including the humanities, as well as the fine and performing arts. Grants awarded must be spent in the fiscal year ending June 30.

Small Research Grants support research and scholarship for the following expenses:

- to collect, analyze *or present* data, including travel to **international** conferences;
- to meet with existing current collaborators to complete a project;
- to obtain access to rare or unique resources not available in any other way;
- to provide for student workers;
- to *purchase computer equipment devoted to specific apparatus*; or
- to process **any other** work pertinent to the success of an existing project.

### *Special emphasis #1: Publication cost requests from tenure-track faculty*

A small number of small grants will be awarded to pay for the publication costs of faculty who are on the tenure track. Costs of publications, such as page charges, publisher fees, or other printing expenses, should be fully documented in the budget justification. If you are eligible for such an award, contact the RDC for further review information.

### *Special emphasis #2: Summer travel across the end of the Fiscal Year*

A very limited number of grants will be awarded that allow travel in the summer across the fiscal year boundary, such as from June 15 to July 15. Applicants requesting travel **specifically** across the fiscal year boundary, should **highlight this when** answering the questions for this request on the Application form.

<p><b>EXCLUSIONS:</b> Small grants will <b>NOT</b> support: travel only to attend <i>national</i> conferences; travel to explore potential collaborations; clerical support for manuscript preparation; support for advanced degrees; preparation of theses or dissertations; publication of theses or dissertations; or stand-alone computer purchases. Please contact the RDC for clarification of the validity of an expense prior to submitting the application.</p>
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## **II. ELIGIBILITY**

Any full-time employee of the University who holds faculty rank and for whom research is a requirement of their position is eligible to apply for funding. **However, in the case of individuals on part-time or renewable yearly contracts, the department employing the individual must guarantee that if the grant is awarded the recipient will be in the employ of the University during the time period in which the grant is in effect.** Individuals who hold adjunct appointments at ETSU, but are not paid for their services, may be eligible to apply for a Small Research Grant if research is a requirement of their position. In order to be considered for a grant an adjunct faculty member must also identify an ETSU unit that

agrees to assume responsibility for management of the grant budget. They may conduct the project in collaboration with a full-time compensated ETSU faculty member as a Co-Investigator and should provide a detailed description of the contributions to programs at ETSU made by the adjunct faculty member (e.g. service on graduate committees, lectures in courses). **Students, postdoctoral fellows, residents, interns and similar non-faculty positions are NOT eligible for Small Grant awards.**

**To distribute funds as widely as possible, a Major Grant FY2019 awardee may not submit a Small Grant application as either PI or Co-Investigator.**

### III. FORM ACCESS

RDC Small Grant forms are now on-line using FormStack. To complete a form, simply go to the RDC web site <http://www.etsu.edu/research/rdc/smallgrant/> and click on the link to go directly to the form. While completing the form, users can begin a form, save and then complete it up to 28 days later. Once complete, submit by following the instructions in *Section V: Proposal Submission*.

- Modern web browser software such as Mozilla Firefox, Mac Safari, and Google Chrome are strongly recommended. *Internet Explorer may not function reliably. You may test your system by going to the link for the test form in Section V: Proposal Submission.*
- A Word template is provided at the RDC Small Grant webpage to prepare text off-line for transfer into the form boxes. This increases accuracy in spell checking and character counting. *The online forms do NOT spell check. The online forms count **all** characters, including spaces and punctuation.*
- An Excel template is provided at the RDC Small Grant webpage to prepare budget amounts off-line for transfer into the form boxes. *The forms do NOT perform budget calculations.*
- Advance preparation is the KEY to success with these applications. USE the templates prior to going online. ASK the [RDC@etsu.edu](mailto:RDC@etsu.edu) when questions arise.

### IV. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

#### 1. SUMMARY INFORMATION

Information critical for reference by the ORSPA staff and the reviewers is placed at the beginning of the form. Each blank is a duplicate of information found in the other sections of the application, so see the instructions in later sections for further explanation. The only exception is the **Date of Submission** box.

#### 2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

The PI specifically directs the project and is responsible for reporting progress and budgetary requirements. Any full-time employee of the University who holds faculty rank and for whom research is a requirement of their position is eligible to apply for funding. See the Eligibility criteria in II. Eligibility above. If needed, one Co-Investigator (Co-I) may participate in the project. A faculty member may be PI on only one submission, and may be CO-I on only one other submission.

- The **College** entry is a drop-down choice; click on the triangle and hold to see the list.

- Give your ETSU email address for this official University communication.
- Give the phone number at which you can most easily be reached, which may not necessarily be your office number.
- Give the number of years for your current position and the date when you began your position at ETSU to aid reviewer evaluation.
- Answer briefly the questions regarding funding history providing titles of your most recent RDC and/or external grants, including funding agency.
- *A short 2 pp cv and funding history will be attached (see Section IV. Part 7 below).*

### 3. CO-INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Only one Co-Investigator (Co-I) may participate in the project. The information blanks for the Co-I are the same as that for the PI. A faculty member may be PI on only one submission, and may be CO-I on only one other submission. See the Eligibility criteria above.

*In all of your responses, please remember that you are writing for a diverse faculty audience. Try to make the compelling points about your grant in a manner clear to any reader, regardless of discipline.*

### 4. PROJECT NARRATIVE

The narrative includes the following sections that must be completed. A Word template is provided at the RDC website to prepare text off-line for transfer into the form boxes. This increases accuracy in spell checking and character counting. *The forms do NOT spell check. The forms count all characters, including spaces and punctuation.*

Project Title: Give a descriptive title for the project. [100 characters or less]

Project Abstract: Provide an abstract or summary of the project in non-technical language that is understandable to all RDC faculty. The RDC defines non-technical language as terms found in an abridged dictionary. The abstract should provide the reviewer with a *compelling* statement about the project. [1500 characters or less]

Project Benefits: Give a brief statement of the benefits of this project, if funded, to the University. Specifically address the increase in fundability, leverage or visibility that would be achieved with these funds. [1000 characters or less]

Project Introduction: Give a statement of the hypothesis or problem to be investigated, including rationale and possible outcomes. [1500 characters or less]

Specific Aims: State the activities, objectives or specific aims of the research to be performed. [750 characters or less]

Design and Methods: Describe the experimental design and methods in sufficient detail to be understandable to other faculty. [1500 characters or less]

Significance: State the significance of the research and the benefits expected to the field of study. Include the potential for publications and name any specific journals

or books or other means by which the work will be disseminated. You may include discussion of the potential for publishable results, pursuit of additional grants, or other benefits for the University. [1500 characters or less]

Career Aims: Describe how the results or products of your work will be used to forward the aims of your career, particularly outside the University, and how it may contribute to your tenure or promotion. [750 characters or less]

Literature Cited: Using footnotes in the text, provide any referenced **key** citations, *particularly those on which you are an author*, and how they relate directly to this project. [2000 characters or less]

## 5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Please answer several questions regarding outcomes from the application, including names of likely publication venues of any type.
- Please also indicate the needed Special Approvals that will be necessary for the project in the left column. Indicate any Special Approvals that have already been obtained in the right column. If checked, attach a copy of the approval document in the Appendix (see Section 8 below).

## 6. BUDGET

Budget Costs: In this section, list and give the cost of the items in your budget in reasonable detail. An Excel template is provided at the RDC site to prepare budget amounts off-line for transfer into the form boxes. *The forms do NOT perform budget calculations.*

**Contact Ms. Cynthia Hardin in the ORSPA office for budget preparation assistance.**

Budget Justification: Provide detailed information indicating how costs for each item or category were determined and justify why specific line items are required by the proposed project. Please give information which connects items to the specific aims or objectives of the proposed work. If salary is included in the budget, please try to indicate *how and when* the salaries will be used. Remember, RDC grants are only valid for the Fiscal year: from July 1 to June 30.

**If any section has no entries, please enter a 0 in the Subtotal box for that section.**

### Personnel

- PIs or Co-Is are **not** eligible for summer stipends or Course Release time through the Small Grants Program.
- Graduate Assistantship (GA) awards are **not** chargeable expenses through the Small Grants Program.
- Temporary employees are paid an hourly amount with 8% benefits budgeted. However, if an ETSU employee who is eligible for retirement savings contributions is hired through a temporary contract for “extra work” on a project, benefits and health insurance (health insurance is added only if the employee is a 12 month employee)

must be added to the stipend request at 23% of the salary figure. Contact the ORSPA staff for clarification.

- For Temporary and Other employees, please attach an addendum showing the position title, a description of the role of the position and duties assigned, and the percent effort on the grant.
- For outside consultants, the PI should refer to the Personal Services section of Agreement Routing Form from the Financial Services Office to determine whether an outside consultant meets University criteria. If the consultant/contractor has already been identified, a letter of support, specifying the proposed rate of pay, should be included with the application. If the project is funded, an independent contractor must enter into a Personal Services Agreement with the University.

### **Operating Expenses and Supplies**

Operating Expenses and Supplies are individual items needed for the project. Please note that stand-alone computer purchases, reprint costs, thesis publication or preparation and similar costs are NOT allowed.

### **Equipment**

Equipment is defined as items greater than \$5,000 by the university and so cannot be purchased on a Small Grant award.

### **Travel**

Only travel to collect or analyze data, or to obtain information pertinent to an existing research project will be considered. **Travel to present research results at an international or domestic conference will be supported.** Please note that **international (including AK, HI and Canada)** travel requires *advance* approval from the President of the University. An itemized list of anticipated expenses should be included. Current guidelines for meals, mileage, and hotel charges are available on the ETSU website.

***Please note that PI must ensure that all budgetary figures are correctly calculated and justified in the budget. Errors in the calculations or lack of thorough justification may negatively influence reviewers & lower their scoring.***

## **7. INVESTIGATOR CVs AND FUNDING HISTORY**

A. **Curriculum Vita**: Attach a brief CV of no more than **2 pages for each investigator**.

Include academic degrees earned, employment history, publications and presentations related to the project proposed, listing only those for the last five years. The combined size of the files must be <5 MB.

B. **Funding History**: For each investigator, include a list of **up to five (5) of your most recent grants received or applied for**, including non-funded submissions. Please clearly indicate RDC applications in any category (Small, Major or Interdisciplinary). Please list most recent awards first, then continue in reverse chronological order. If you have submitted this research elsewhere

for funding or have plans to do so, please include a statement naming the agency and submission date.

- *A list of headings for funding history that can be copied and pasted is on the form itself and on the Word template as well.*

## 8. *Optional Appendix Material*

Because the form boxes cannot accept any non-textual information, applicants are **encouraged** to add any pertinent supporting material including graphics or other formats. Up to three files of a combined size less than 20 MB may be attached to the application. Prepare the files and then click on one of the THREE “Select File” box to upload them to the application.

- PLEASE do not use the appendix material to avoid the length limitations of the fill-in boxes. *Excessive appendix material may negatively influence reviewers.*

**Letters of approval already obtained for the application should be attached in Section 8: Optional Appendix Material, in order to speed account processing if an award is made.**

## 9. DISCLAIMER

Read the statement, then tick the checkbox and type your name in the **Signature** field to validate your understanding of and agreement with the statement.

## **V. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

1. To test online form submission compatibility, use the test site to ensure your browser functions. To do the test, go to this link and fill out and SUBMIT the short Trial Form: [https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc\\_grant\\_application\\_test](https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc_grant_application_test)
2. Once you have completed the application, recheck for completeness and accuracy. Click on the **Submit** button. If there were any omissions or errors on required fields, the submission program will indicate them so that you can correct them.
3. Once all is finally completed, click on the **Submit** button again.
4. You will receive a confirmation of submission message on the web page.
5. You will also receive an **email confirmation** of receipt of the electronic form in a message from ([xxx@formstack.com](mailto:xxx@formstack.com)). Save this as proof of submission.
6. Your application will now be converted into a single pdf document by the friendly RDC staff ☺. **This pdf file will be emailed to you for routing. THIS IS THE ONLY VALID MEANS OF ROUTING THE APPLICATION.**
7. After receipt, check the pdf file for accuracy, then print it out. The printed copy is now used to route the application for approval signatures from the PI and Co-I, the Chair(s) and

Dean(s) of the PI and the Co-I if applicable. Applications must have these signatures in order to be reviewed.

8. Deliver the fully signed application form IN PERSON to the RDC Small Grants Program at the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Administration, 432 Ross Hall, Box 70565.

9. After the electronic and printed signed versions are submitted by **4:30 pm** in accordance with the deadline dates, the application will then be reviewed.

## **VII. REVIEW CRITERIA and PROCESS**

RDC Small Research Grants are awarded on the basis of justification of specific needs to carry out unique scholarship and research. Each application is generally critiqued by 3 or more reviewers, who are given latitude as to the emphasis of their reviews, and provide a score of 1 – Exceptional; 2 – Good; 3 – Unsatisfactory.

Using the average of the scores, applications will be ranked. All applicants will receive a copy of the reviewers' critiques, summarizing the strengths and weaknesses. Typical criteria in review include topics such as timeliness of the needed funds, leveraging of the funds for future return to the University, likely outcomes and usefulness for faculty advancement, and potential for meaningful dissemination of stimulating scholarship.

**Grant proposals that do not follow the guidelines and instructions in this document will not be reviewed.**

## **VIII. NOTIFICATION OF AWARD**

The RDC uses a rapid review process in order to make timely decisions on these applications. RDC review of proposals and funding decisions will take approximately one month from the date of submission. Award letters will be sent via email to all successful grant applicants. Unsuccessful applicants also will be notified in writing and may request the reviewers' critiques in order to revise and resubmit their application. If a proposal is not funded, the RDC encourages the applicant to discuss the reviewers' comments with the RDC Chair or Small Grants Co-chair, revise the application according to the comments, and resubmit during a subsequent funding cycle.

## **IX. AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

Successful grant applicants will be notified in writing of approval. An award **account index number will be provided ONLY WHEN ALL special approvals are obtained**. Failure to submit special approval verification within 3 months of the award notice may lead to revocation of the award at that time.

**Research projects involving human subjects, animals, international travel or hazardous materials can be submitted to the RDC without the relevant approvals in place. However, if the proposal is funded, all Special Approvals must be obtained by the appropriate University committee before funds are released.**



Accounting procedures and budget administration for these awards are the responsibility of the department of the awardee. The ORSPA office may provide oversight as possible, but the use of the funds should be processed through the applicant's normal departmental processes. ***Failure to spend funds in a timely fashion may lead to revocation of the award.***

The RDC approves budgetary allocation of the funds available for the fiscal year, evaluates grant applications, and selects those to be supported. Grants are awarded for the fiscal year July 1 through June 30. Any RDC allocated money must be spent within this time period. **Please note that you are bound by these Terms and Conditions in the award letter that you will sign if funded.** *Please also note that the Accounting office begins closing its books in early June, so funds must be used or encumbered **before** this closing date. There are no exceptions to this policy and applicants who fail to use their funds within these guidelines cannot be reimbursed in any other way.*

#### **X. INFORMATION AND CONTACTS**

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- Robert Sawyer, Small Grants Co-Chair [sawyerr@etsu.edu](mailto:sawyerr@etsu.edu)
- RDC [rdc@etsu.edu](mailto:rdc@etsu.edu)
- ORSPA [research@etsu.edu](mailto:research@etsu.edu)
- your College RDC representative see listing on RDC website
- David Hurley, RDC Chair [hurleyd@etsu.edu](mailto:hurleyd@etsu.edu)

**ALL RDC members and Chair are available for consultation to assist applicants in preparing the application, budget, cost justification, etc. Additionally, ORSPA staff can answer questions that applicants have on special approval and budgetary issues.**

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**SEEKING INFORMATION *PRIOR* TO SUBMISSION IS  
CRITICAL FOR FUNDING SUCCESS.**

## **RDC Small Grant Application Keys to Success**

- Read and follow Guidelines & Instructions on the RDC website  
<http://www.etsu.edu/research/rdc/smallgrant/default.aspx>
- Frequently emphasize in your writing about how this project increases your development as a faculty member.
- Include statements explaining how these funds will be used to leverage additional external funds or visibility for the university.
- Prepare application drafts using the Text and Budget templates from RDC website before starting online submission.
- Use up-to-date web browsers such as Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome or Mac Safari. *Test your browser at the test site*  
[https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc\\_grant\\_application\\_test](https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc_grant_application_test)
- Ask any RDC member to be a preliminary reviewer, to read the application before submission. Ensure that it is written to be understandable by any faculty member, not necessarily in your discipline, department or college.
- Include supplemental charts, tables or figures as appendix material attached to the online form in Section 8.
- Have someone proofread a draft of the application before submission.
- Ensure that the budget numbers and justification have been checked for accuracy.
- Ask questions by email to [RDC@etsu.edu](mailto:RDC@etsu.edu)

