I. PURPOSE

The Research Development Committee (RDC) is responsible for distribution of internal funds to support research. These funds are administered by 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. Major Research Grants are intended to support and encourage research and scholarship which is broadly interpreted to include the sciences and non-sciences including the humanities and the fine and performing arts. Grants are awarded for the fiscal year July 1 through June 30. Any RDC allocated money must be encumbered within this time period. **Collaborative and interdisciplinary projects are encouraged.**

**ALL RDC members and the Chair are available for consultation to assist applicants in preparing the application, budget, budget justification, etc. Additionally, the ORSPA staff can answer questions that applicants may have and provide examples of recently funded proposals.**

**Deadlines:**
- **11:30pm Friday, Mar. 1, 2019**, electronic submission
- **then 4:30pm, Friday, March 8, 2019**, for signed paper copy

**Improvements this year**

1. Major Grant budgets are limited to $10,000 total costs. Applications that exceed this by any amount will not be considered.
2. Online submission continues as in the past. There is a test form to ensure that your computer and software will function correctly. Please see **Section III. Form Access** for more information.
3. The RDC has an email address for grantees: RDC@etsu.edu Please transition to using this address whenever possible.
4. It is essential to the continuation of the RDC that successful applicants employ proper administrative and approval procedures. Please see **Section VIII. Award Administration**.

**Thank you for your interest in the RDC MAJOR Grant Program**
Major Research Grants support research and scholarship costs which can include faculty summer and student stipends, supplies, equipment, travel and other justified expenses.

- Please be sure to justify all items in the budget fully and explain the relationship of each item to the aims of the proposal.
- Only travel to present, collect or analyze data, or information pertinent to an existing project, will be considered. RDC Major Grants will NOT support travel to conferences without presenting or travel to explore potential collaborations.
- RDC Major Grants do NOT support clerical support for manuscript preparation, support for advanced degrees, preparation of theses or dissertations, or publication of theses or dissertations for faculty or graduate assistants.
- RDC Major Grants do not support general computer purchases. Only computers dedicated to an instrument or other specific apparatus will be considered.

It is essential to include a statement on how the proposal will increase the likelihood of extramural funding flowing into the university. This “leveraging” of funds is a critical aspect of the mission of the RDC.

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.

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 Major Research Grant if research comprises a portion of their workload. 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. He/she must also conduct the project in collaboration with a full-time compensated ETSU faculty member and must provide a detailed description of the contributions to programs at ETSU made by the adjunct faculty member (e.g. service on graduate committees, supervision of interns, lectures in courses).

- ETSU Students, Post-doctoral Fellows, Medical Residents and Fellows and any other non-faculty positions are NOT eligible as PI or Co-I.

Principal Investigators may not receive a Major Research Grant in consecutive years, or in more than twice in any five-year period. Any PI whose application is funded will not be eligible for a Small Grant during the Major Grant award period. Any PI can submit only one Major Research Grant application in any funding cycle, and can serve as Co-Inv. on only one additional application.
III. ACCESSING THE FORMS

RDC Major 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/Major/ and click on the link to go directly to the form. You can directly go to https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc_major_grant_application_form_fy2020 Completing and submitting the form will require online access. However, users can begin a form, stop and complete it at a later time up to 28 days. Once complete, submit by following the instructions in Section V: Proposal Submission.

- Web browser programs such as Firefox, Safari, and Chrome are strongly recommended. Internet Explorer may not function reliably. You may test your system by going to the link for the test form shown in Section V: Proposal Submission.

- A Word template is provided at the RDC site 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, but DO display the count of all characters, including spaces and punctuation.

- An Excel template is provided at the RDC site to prepare budget amounts off-line for transfer into the form boxes. The online forms do NOT perform budget calculations.

IV. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Proposals submitted that do not follow these guidelines will not be considered for review.

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 often be reached, which may not be your office number.
• Give the number of years for your current position and the date when you began your position at ETSU to help reviewers assess the Priority rating.
• Answer the questions regarding funding history including titles of your most recent RDC and/or external grants, including funding agency.
• A complete cv and funding history will be attached in Section 7.

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 in II. Eligibility above.

4. PROJECT NARRATIVE
The narrative includes the following sections that must be completed. A Word template is provided at the RDC site 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.

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.

Project Title: Give a descriptive title for the project of 150 characters.

Project Abstract: Provide an abstract or summary in non-technical language that is understandable to all RDC faculty of 1500 characters including spaces and punctuation. 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 entire project.

Project Benefits: Give a brief statement of the benefits of this project, if funded, to the University of 1500 characters. Specifically address the increase in fundability, leverage or visibility that would be achieved with these funds.

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

Specific Aims: State the activities, objectives or specific aims of the research to be performed in no more than 750 characters.

Design and Methods: Describe the experimental design and methods in sufficient detail to be understandable to others in your college, in no more than 3000 characters.
**Significance:** State the significance of the research and the benefits expected to the field of study in 1500 characters. 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 benefit for the university.

**Career Aims:** Describe in 750 characters 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.

**Literature Cited:** Using footnotes in the text, provide these referenced key citations, particularly those on which you are an author, which relate directly to this project, in 10,000 characters or less.

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**Please note that you may need to use the vertical scroll bars on the right side of the text boxes to view all of your entry. Once submitted the boxes will expand to the correct size for reviewers’ view.**

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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 every item 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 assistance.

**Budget Justification:** Provide detailed information indicating how item estimates were calculated and justify why specific line items are required by the proposed project. Try to give information about which items are related to which specific aims or objectives of the proposed work. If salary is included in the budget, be sure to indicate when the salaries will be used. For example, if you request a summer stipend, you must indicate which summer months you will work on this project. 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**

**Summer Stipend:** The PI on an academic year appointment may request funding for a summer stipend. The amount of stipend will be equivalent to the teaching of one 3-hour course during the summer, up to a maximum of $2,500 per grant cycle. **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. During the entire summer term, the recipient of a summer research stipend will not be permitted to teach more than one course or a maximum of 4 semester hours. The total amount of other summer salary support must adhere to TBR policy.

**Research Graduate Assistants:** Graduate Assistants (GA) will receive $9,800, the approved stipend rate and graduate tuition remission for the academic year during which the appointment is held. **Funds will only support one-half of an assistantship (stipend plus tuition).** Therefore, GAs may work 10 hr/wk for 2 semesters or 20 hr/wk for 1 semester only.

**Temporary Employees:** Temporary employees are paid an hourly wage and receive benefits (7.65%). Undergrad or graduate students may serve as temporary employees.

**Part-time Faculty:** The RDC will accept applications requesting release time for the PI during the academic year. Such awards would usually be for a single course (3-4 hours). Applications that request release time for research must include, as an addendum to the grant application, statements from the PI’s chair or dean addressing the following points:

1. An explanation why release time through this mechanism is necessary and why release time has not been made available through the regular process of faculty work-load assignments.
2. Assurances that appropriate part-time faculty can be hired to replace the PI without significantly diminishing the quality of the instructional program of the academic unit.
3. Information on the specific teaching load of the PI for the previous 4 semesters and the teaching load the PI will be guaranteed for the period of the award.
4. Assurances that the teaching load of other faculty in the academic unit will not be increased due to this award of release time.

**Independent Contractor or Consultant:** The PI must complete an Agreement Routing Form from the Comptroller’s Office to determine whether an outside consultant meets University criteria to qualify as an independent contractor or employee. An independent contractor must enter into a Personal Services Contract with the University. An independent contractor will be paid in a lump sum amount.

**Operating Expenses and Supplies**
Operating Expenses and Supplies are individual items that cost less than $5,000 excluding computers. Please note that publication costs, reprint costs, thesis publication or preparation and similar costs are NOT allowed.

**Equipment** is defined by ETSU as “an individual item priced ≥ $5,000”. The University retains title to all equipment purchased until or unless it decides to reassign it. Proposals that request the purchase of equipment must include a justification that addresses the following points:
1. Is there documentation of price quotes?
2. Has the equipment been requested through the regular budget process?
3. Have efforts been made to determine if the equipment could be borrowed from another unit of the university?
4. Will the equipment be available for any one else to use or will the project require its full-time use?
5. Is there clear and convincing documentation/explanation that the primary use of the equipment is for research, not instruction?
6. If possible, attach a statement from the department chair or dean guaranteeing maintenance of the equipment for the duration of the project.

**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 a conference will not be supported. An itemized list of anticipated expenses should be included. Current guidelines for meals, mileage, and hotel charges are available on the ETSU website: http://www.etsu.edu/fa/fs/FSCorms.aspx

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**Please note that PI must ensure that all budgetary figures are correctly calculated and entered on the forms. Errors in the calculations may negatively influence reviewers and lower their enthusiasm for an application.**

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**7. INVESTIGATOR CVs AND FUNDING HISTORY**

A. **Curriculum Vita:** Attach a brief CV of 2-3 pages for each investigator. Include academic degrees earned, employment history, publications and presentations related to the current project proposed here and only 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 grants received during the last 10 years or as is reasonable for the space, including non-funded submissions. Please list most recent awards first, and 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, and briefly describe any differences between that proposal and the current application.
   - A list of headings that can be copied and pasted is on the form itself and on the Word template as well.

C. **Results of Prior RDC Support:** For each investigator, include a list of RDC grants during the last 10 years or as is reasonable for the space, including non-funded submissions. Please list most recent awards first, and continue in reverse chronological order.
provide detailed information about the outcome of the funded project such as publications, presentations, and student participants.
• A list of headings 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, photos, audio, video or other formats. Up to three files of a combined size less than 15 MB may be attached to the application. Prepare the files and then click on the “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 size may negatively influence reviewers.

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
To test online form submission compatibility, use the test site. 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

1. After completing the application, recheck for completeness and accuracy.

2. Once satisfactory, click on the Submit button. If there were any omissions or errors on required fields, the submission program will indicate them. Please correct all errors.

3. Click again on the Submit button. If no errors, you will receive a confirmation of submission message.

4. You should receive a confirmation of submission message on the web page. You can now quit the website.

5. You will also receive an email confirmation of receipt of the electronic form in a message from (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, print the application for routing the application for approval signatures from the following: 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 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.

**UPDATED:** Submissions must be made electronically by 11:30 pmj Friday, March 01, 2019; routed signed copies are due by 4:30 pm on Friday, March 08, 2019, with no exceptions.

## VI. REVIEW CRITERIA

RDC Major Research grants are awarded on the basis of merit and priority of the individual proposal and appropriate justification of specific needs to carry out the research. There are specific guidelines regarding format and content of the application.

*Please review the criteria for both Priority and Merit. It is often beneficial to include language in the application that directly reflects the terminology of these criteria that will be used in review.*

### Determination of Proposal Rank Score

Each application is given an OVERALL score which is based on both Priority and Merit criteria listed below. The final score is calculated from both of these scores, weighted according to the judgment of the reviewers.

### Priority Criteria

The RDC considers applications from eligible applicants, but Priority will be given to those applicants in the following order from highest to lowest:

- New researchers
- Researchers at all levels for whom an RDC grant will enable completion of preliminary work that will help the researcher become competitive for external funding
- Experienced researchers in need of additional funding to sustain a research project pending receipt of external funds ("bridge funding") or whose track record is as such to suggest a high likelihood of successful results
- Experienced researchers entering new research fields
- Researchers for whom external funding realistically is not available

Faculty members who have some external funding are not automatically precluded from receiving a Major Research Grant from the RDC. Please include information showing that the project is not the same project as that receiving external support. Note that priority is also given to researchers who are experienced investigators in the process of changing direction in their research or scholarly activity.
Importantly, the applicant must inform the RDC if he/she is submitting a proposal to an external funding source requesting support for the same project described in the application to the RDC. In the event that an award is made by the external agency after award or during the period of the Major Grant, the funds will have to be returned to the RDC for assignment to another applicant, as determined by the Chair of the RDC and the Vice Provost for Research after discussion with the PI.

**Merit Criteria**

The following criteria are applied by the RDC in evaluating proposals:

- The application is generally understandable to any faculty member.
- The description of the research is detailed and permits thorough evaluation.
- The research problem is of sufficient importance, significance, and originality.
- The problem is not more complex than stated.
- The specific aims are measurable.
- The project is likely to produce new and useful information.
- The methodology is adequate and appropriate to the research.
- The overall design of the research or scholarly activity has been carefully thought out.
- The investigator appears to be familiar with pertinent literature and methodology.
- If a scientific investigation, the proposed research is based on a sound hypothesis that rests on sufficient evidence.
- The proposed budget is reasonable and sufficiently justified.
- There is a good possibility of external sponsored support.

### Reviewer scoring guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Priority descriptors</th>
<th>Merit descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New Researchers</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research enabling preliminary work increasing competition for external funds</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Experienced researchers needing bridge funds or previous successful track record</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Experienced researchers entering new research fields</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Marginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>All other researchers</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research projects involving human subjects, animals, 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.
VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

RDC review of proposals and funding decisions will take approximately 6 weeks 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. All applicants will receive a copy of the reviewers’ critiques. If a proposal is not funded, the RDC encourages the applicant to request the reviewers’ comments from the RDC Chair, revise the application according to the comments, and resubmit during a subsequent funding cycle.

An award account 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.

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 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.

VIII. INFORMATION CONTACTS

- David Hurley, RDC Chair  hurleyd@etsu.edu
- Office of Research  research@etsu.edu
- your College RDC representative  listed on the RDC website
RDC MAJOR Grant Application Keys to Success

☐ Read and follow the instructions and guidelines on the RDC website
   http://www.etsu.edu/research/rdc/major/

☐ Test online form submission to ensure your browser is compatible. To
do the test, go to this link and fill out and SUBMIT the Trial Form:
   https://bgcop.formstack.com/forms/rdc_grant_application_test

☐ Complete drafts using the templates for text in Word and for budget in
   Excel from RDC website prior to starting online submission.

☐ Remember to emphasize how this project increases your
development as a faculty member.

☐ Be sure to include statements about how these funds will be used to
   attract additional external grant funds or visibility for the university.

☐ All RDC members may serve as reviewers, so ensure the application
   is written to be understandable by any faculty member, not
   necessarily in your discipline, school or college.

☐ Include supplemental charts, tables, figures, photos, audio or video
   as appendix material attached to the online form in Section 8.

☐ Have someone proofread the draft before submission.

☐ Deadlines:
   Electronic submission by 11:30 pm on Friday, March 01, 2019.
   Signature page submission by 4:30 pm on Friday, March 08, 2019.

☐ Ask questions by email to RDC@etsu.edu