SPARC GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT

Application Workshop

UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
Office of Research

1

CONTACT FOR SPARC QUESTIONS

Julie Morris
Research Program Coordinator
Research and Grant Development
Office of the Vice President for Research
jmorris@sc.edu * 803-563-8376

Website: go.sc.edu/SPARC

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2

SPARC GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT

Support to **P**romote **A**dvancement of **R**esearch and **C**reativity

• Designed to support and encourage outstanding students to pursue innovative research directions at USC

• Process of applying provides training for writing competitive research proposals

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3

SPARC STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

All PhD-degree seeking students (apply year 2 or later)

MFA students (apply year 1 or later)

MA in Public History students (apply year 1 or later)

MD-PhD students (apply year 1 or later of <u>PhD phase</u> of program)

International students are eligible

Not eligible:

- *MD, PharmD, and non-PhD seeking doctoral students*
- *Masters degree seeking students except as above*

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4

SPARC STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- GPA 3.0 minimum
- Must be current student when applying
- Must be enrolled at least one semester after the grant is awarded
- Recipients of major fellowships not eligible
  - Such as NIH F31, NSF GRF, etc.
- May only receive SPARC funding one time

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5

FACULTY ADVISOR ELIGIBILTY

- Must be student's Faculty Advisor of record (*see guidelines for special circumstances*)
- Must be current employees - Letters of Recommendation from former faculty members, no longer employed by the university, will <u>not</u> be accepted.
- Faculty mentors may sponsor <u>no more than two</u> student SPARC applications per year

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6

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND AUTHORSHIP

- **All SPARC applicants are bound by the**
  - **Responsible Conduct of Research code of ethics,**
  - **Carolinian Creed and**
  - **University's Honor Code.**

- The **graduate student is the primary author** on the proposal and is responsible for writing their own proposal.

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7

SPARC FUNDS AVAILABLE

- Up to **$5000** per award
- May be used for a variety of project support costs, including salary, supplies, and other costs essential for project
- Project period up to (maximum of) **15 months**
- Grant start date: May 1 *of award year*
- Grant end date: July 31* *of following year*
  Example: May 1, 2024 – July 31, 2025
  *or ends upon graduation, whichever is first

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8

SPARC TIMELINE

Proposal due date: *see website for specific date*
　　　Due by 5:00 pm EST on deadline date

Grant awards announced: (mid-late) March
　　Please anticipate high competitiveness

Grant start date: May 1st

Grant end date: July 31st of following year
　　(or upon graduation, whichever is first)

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9

THE APPLICATION

Yep, finally getting to the good stuff ☺

10

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

➢ Follow formatting instructions in Application Guidelines
➢ Use language appropriate to non-experts: *Reviewers are not from your department!*

• **Maximum proposal length: 3 pages**
  includes all figures, tables, images, etc.
  NO APPENDICES, NO HYPERLINKS

• **Proposal Narrative Sections:**
  Background and Significance
  Project Description, Design, and Approach
  Significance of Funding to Graduate Experience
  Works Cited – not included in 3-page limitation

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11

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Background and Significance

• Discuss the proposed idea and its context relative to the current state of knowledge in the field.

• Explain to the reviewers <u>why</u> the proposed project is important, novel, and exciting.

• Clearly define the project topic, question or hypothesis

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12

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Project Description, Design, & Approach

- Detailed description of:
  - project objectives,
  - proposed methods and activities (*detailed, clear, & specific*),
  - anticipated outcomes (*be specific*)
- **Timeline** of tasks
  - ➤ provide as a table or other clear graphic format
- **Plan for dissemination** of the work
  - ➤ *be specific; provide names of anticipated publications, conferences, etc.*

13

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Significance of Funding to Graduate Experience

Explain how this proposed research or creative activity will:
- advance your graduate education and objectives
- enhance your dissertation or thesis research
- bridge your funding resources
- expand your research or creative direction

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14

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE TIPS

- **Feasibility** – emphasize and provide evidence of feasibility; proposal must convince the reviewers the project will likely be successful in 15 months and with $5000 (*do not be unrealistically ambitious*)

- Include preliminary data, if available
- Define all acronyms the first time used
- Limit use of jargon
- Make sure figures, tables, etc. are relevant, captions are large enough to easily read, explained/referenced in proposal text, and cited (if appropriate)

➤*Write for your audience to understand!*

15

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE TIPS

PROOFREAD
and
Follow guidelines!

16

BIBLIOGRAPHY

aka: Works Cited, References Cited, etc.

- **up to 2 pages allowed for this section**
- this is not included in the 3-page limit for the proposal narrative
- use the standard convention of your discipline, including the author(s), title or article, journal title, volume, pages and date.

This is a required section for ALL proposals

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17

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Budget Form
- Current and Pending Support Form
- Biographical Sketch
- Authorship and GPA Certification Form
- Letter of Support (may not be required)
- Letter of Recommendation

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18

BUDGET FORM

- Use *only* the Budget Form on the SPARC website
- You must show the calculations made to arrive at *each* dollar amount in the Budget Justification section
- *Example linked to budget form*
- Hourly rates for Salary Support varies
  - check with your Departmental Business Manager or Faculty Advisor
- Funds awarded can/may be lower than requested

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19

BUDGET FORM JUSTIFICATION (Bottom of budget form)

A. Student Salary (Include hourly rate, anticipated/average hours per week, and number of weeks)

B. Temporary Help Salary (Include hourly rate, anticipated/average hours per week, and number of weeks)

C. Consultants, Transcriptionist Fees, etc. (pay for service, no fringe; itemize)

D. Travel to Conduct the Project (cannot also request E; itemize including destination, anticipated dates, flight/mileage, lodging, etc.)

E. Travel to Professional Conference (cannot also request D; *Max $1000*; itemize including conference name, destination, anticipated dates, flight/mileage, lodging, etc.)

F. Tuition (Special Enrollment Z-Status students only)

G. Materials and Supplies (itemize incl description, cost per item, quantity, etc.)

H. Database access fees, software, etc. (Provide details for each item, include: one-time fee or subscription with length of time needed, source such as USC tech, etc)

I. Costs for Recruiting Human Subjects/Participant Incentives (only if allowed by Department and letter of support required; itemize number of participants, item cost, etc.)

J. Animal Maintenance Costs (itemize all costs including number of animals, time, etc.)

K. Sample Processing Costs (itemize all costs including number of samples, cost by sample, etc.)

L. Publication costs/fees (include name of anticipated journal, itemize if per page costs)

M. Other Costs (specify and itemize)

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20

BUDGET FORM
(Top of budget form)

HOW To fill out the table on the budget form:

1) Double click on the table. This will open an excel spreadsheet linked to the word doc form.

2) Once finished entering information in the spreadsheet, save and close it – just like any standard spreadsheet. All info will transfer to the table in the word doc.

A. Student Salary	Hours	Rate (hourly)	Fringe Rate*	Subtotal
During semesters taking classes/ course credit			0.45%	$0.00
During semesters NOT taking classes/ course credit (such as summer)			8.13%	$0.00
Subtotal Student Salary				**$0.00**
B. Temporary Help Salary (ex. Undergrads)				
During semesters taking classes			0.45%	$0.00
During semesters NOT taking classes/ course credit (such as summer)			8.13%	$0.00
C. Consultant, Transcriptionist, etc (non-salary)				
Total Salary/Personnel Costs Requested				**$0.00**
D Travel to Conduct Project (D OR E - not both)				
E. Travel to Professional Conference (D OR E - max $1000)				
F. Tuition (Z Status Students only)				
G. Materials and Supplies				
H. Database access fees, software, etc.				
I. Costs for Recruiting Human Subjects/Participant Incentives				
J. Animal Maintenance Costs				
K. Sample processing costs				
L. Publication costs/fees				
M. Other Costs (subtotal - specify below)				
Total Amount Requested				**$0.00**

21

BUDGET-ALLOWABLE COSTS *Review Guidelines

- Student salary and fringe benefits
  - *Semesters taking classes vs not taking classes (ex. Summer vs Fall/Spring)*
  - *Salary not allowed for 12-month GRA appointments*
- Temporary help salary and fringe benefits, including undergraduates
- Consultant/Transcriptionist fees
- Student travel – only ONE of the following may be included
  - Travel essential to conduct the project OR
  - Travel to present SPARC research at conference, meeting, performance, exhibition, etc. (*$1000 max, regardless of destination or number of conferences; NOT $1000 per conference*)

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22

BUDGET-ALLOWABLE COSTS *Review Guidelines

- Tuition for Special Enrollment Status students
- Project materials, supplies, and/or equipment
  - *electronics or peripherals such as cpu nodes, SBCs, cameras, voice recorders, etc. may be considered with additional justification – see guidelines
  - Satellite phones *if mandated* for safety/security for travel in high-risk areas
- Database access fees, software, etc
- Participant incentives/Recruitment of Human Subjects
- Animal maintenance costs
- Sample processing costs
- Publication costs, *if applicant is first author*
- Other costs not specified may be considered (*must justify!*)

23

BUDGET-UNALLOWABLE COSTS *Review Guidelines

- Food (per diem is allowed for travel)
- Compensation for faculty members
- Computers/laptops*
- Passport fees, vaccination fees, ID cards, travel visas
- Student health insurance fees
- Salary, incentives, or payments to individuals abroad or otherwise prohibited by USC policy
- Salary for students with 12-month GRA appointments
- Office space rental
- Purchases made prior to project start date

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24

BUDGET-PARTICIPANT INCENTIVES

- **Department Pre-Approval Required**
- **Must include** a Letter of Support from Department Business Manager (*see guidelines for format*)
- Must be specifically justified / explained in budget including amount per participant, number of participants, timing (esp if multiple payments), form of compensation, etc.
- Can be subject to exclusion from budget

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25

CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT FORM

- Disclosure and duration of student funding sources required
- Concurrent funding is allowed
- Pending = applied for at time of SPARC submission
- Form requires signature of ONE of the following: your Faculty advisor, Department Chair, Graduate Program Director, or department/program designee – print form, obtain signature, scan, save as PDF
  - ➢ electronic signatures are allowed if all pages and forms can be compiled into ONE document for proposal submission

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26

CURRENT AND PENDING SUPPORT FORM

Current Support Please list all current sources of financial support for your graduate degree, including assistantships, fellowships, scholarships, tuition supplements and any other type of support.

Type of Assistantship, Name of Fellowship or Other Support	Source of Support (university department, federal agency, foundation, etc.)	Dollar Amount of Support	Duration of Support

Pending Support Please list all sources of support that you have applied for at the time of this application.

Type of Assistantship, Name of Fellowship or Other Support	Source of Support (university department, federal agency, foundation, etc.)	Dollar Amount of Support	Duration of Support

Requires
signature of ONE of the following:

Faculty advisor,
Department Chair,
Graduate Program Director,
or department/program designee

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27

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (2-PAGE LIMIT)

Name
First and Last Name of Student Applicant
Degree Program (ex. Biological Sciences PhD Program)
University email address

Education (list all degrees in the following format)
Institution and Location   Field of Study   Degree   Year
Include current degree program, field of study, and anticipated graduation date.

Professional Experience (in reverse chronological order)
List positions held which are relevant to your degree program, at USC and elsewhere, with dates

Fellowships and Honors
List major fellowships and awards you have received and the date(s), at USC and elsewhere

Peer-Reviewed Publications
List all peer-reviewed publications where you are the author or a co-author, while at USC and elsewhere

Professional Presentations or Exhibitions or Performances:
List all professional presentations, abstracts, exhibitions, and/or performances, while at USC and elsewhere

Professional/University Service
List relevant professional or university service activities, while at USC and elsewhere

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28

AUTHORSHIP AND GPA CERTIFICATION FORM

Research Integrity and Authorship

All participants are bound by the Responsible Conduct of Research code of ethics, the Carolinian Creed and the University's Honor Code. Violations of these codes will result in an immediate decline or withdrawal of funding and referral to the appropriate office for disciplinary measures.

The graduate student is the primary author on the proposal and is responsible for writing their own SPARC proposal. Violations related to plagiarism include, but are not limited to, copying text from previous or same round proposals without proper citations, failure to include references or to cite said references, and any other forms of misconduct or misrepresentation.

I confirm the graduate student applicant was the primary author of this proposal. This submission meets the Research Integrity and Authorship guidelines detailed above.

Current USC GPA in Graduate Program

I confirm that the GPA listed below is the applicant's most current GPA available for the current degree program.

Current GPA: _____

Requires
signatures of BOTH:
student applicant AND
faculty advisor

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29

LETTER(s) OF SUPPORT

- **Required** if requesting participant incentives
  - Must be from Business Manager following format in guidelines
- Optional but recommended under certain circumstances
  - project needs special access to samples/processing, equipment, resources, archives, space, training, etc.
  - permissions granted for collaborations or access such as schools, partnering institutions, archives, non-profits, etc.
  - receiving donations of material, equipment, instrument time, samples, etc.

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30

COMBINE DOCUMENTS INTO ONE FILE

Complete application by making ONE PDF or Word file in following order:

- Proposal
- Bibliography
- Budget Form
- Current and Pending Support Form (with required signature)
- Biographical Sketch
- Authorship and GPA Certification Form (signed by faculty advisor)
- Letter of Support(s) (if needed)

Name the file: Student Lastname_First name (ex. Smith_Jane)
Provide this one electronic file (Word or PDF) to your Faculty Advisor

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31

FACULTY ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Faculty Advisor:

- completes the Faculty Letter of Recommendation on personal or department letterhead (see guidelines)
- one page max
- appends Letter of Recommendation to end of student's application / proposal file
- submits proposal through USCeRA

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32

FACULTY ADVISOR

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Communicate early with your advisor regarding your interest and intent to apply
- Ensure that your advisor has sufficient time for completing letters, requirements, submission, etc. – students are encouraged to discuss a timeline to submission and deadlines with Advisor
- Provide your advisor with the SPARC guidelines for faculty mentors which detail the letter of recommendation and submission requirements (many faculty are familiar with this program, but forms and processes are occasionally updated/changed)
- Obtain and/or coordinate form signatures and letters of support (if needed); *unless directed otherwise by advisor*

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33

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

34

RESEARCH / TRAVEL ABROAD

- All SPARC travel abroad is subject to approval of USC Education Abroad (for research and/or presentations)
- All SPARC recipients planning to travel abroad must register with USC Education Abroad Office
- Students planning to travel to a country with University Travel Warning must submit Destination of Higher Risk petition
- Contact USC Education Abroad Office for assistance

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35

HUMAN SUBJECTS

- Use of human subjects requires IRB approval (Institutional Review Board) – can apply after SPARC Grant received
- Human Subjects – interviews, surveys, review of personal information, research on pathological specimens, examining medical records, etc. **SEE IRB website**
- Must provide IRB approval *prior* to receiving SPARC funds or starting project
- Contact Office of Research Compliance

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36

VERTEBRATE ANIMALS

- Use of live, vertebrate animals requires IACUC approval (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) – can apply after SPARC Grant received
- Must provide IACUC approval *prior* to receiving SPARC funds or starting project
- Contact Office of Research Compliance

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37

RESUBMISSIONS

- Must adhere to current year's SPARC Application Guidelines
- May resubmit up to 2 times
1) Revise the proposal to address reviewers' comments
2) Write a max one-page Resubmission Narrative responding to the reviewer comments.
3) Attach Resubmission Narrative and Reviewer Comments to the front of the proposal

* REMEMBER - Update ALL supporting documents and remind Faculty Advisor about Letter of Recommendation

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38

REVIEW PROCESS
AWARD REQUIREMENTS

39

SPARC REVIEW PROCESS

- Scoring rubric available on SPARC website
- All proposals will be read by 2 USC faculty from related areas – **NOT your department! Write the proposal accordingly**.
- Scores assigned based on review criteria

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40

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND AUTHORSHIP

- The **student is the primary author and must write the proposal.**
- Plagiarism and other forms of misconduct will result in withdrawal of the proposal without review.
- Must adhere to Responsible Conduct of Research, Carolinian Creed, UofSC Honor Code

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41

REQUIREMENTS IF YOUR GRANT IS FUNDED

- Present poster at Discover USC (*end of April, annually*)
- Complete yearly online surveys to track student progress, publications, presentations, awards (3 years post-award)
- Any presentations or publications produced as a result of the SPARC Grant must acknowledge support from USC's Office of the Vice President for Research
- One page **summary report and photos** submitted at conclusion of project

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42

APPLICATION WORKSHOP REQUIREMENT

After watching this application video:

➢ **complete the SPARC applicant and workshop confirmation form**
   This is the only way to confirm that you watched the video

tinyurl.com/SPARCform OR:

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43

I look forward to your application

Thank you for your time!

Questions? Please contact me:

Julie Morris
Research Program Coordinator
Office of Research and Grant Development
jmorris@sc.edu - 803-563-8376

44