UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Excel Funding Program for Liberal Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
Request for Proposals

Announcement Release Date:	**August 24, 2023**
Application Receipt Date:	**October 24, 2023**
Award Announcement Date:	**February 1, 2024**

Purpose: Sponsored by the Offices of the President, the Vice President for Research, and the Provost, the Excel Program for Liberal Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences will provide funding to USC Columbia and Palmetto College faculty to support their pursuit of creative and scholarly excellence. The specific purpose of this grant program is to support faculty scholarship, facilitate the production of scholarly and creative works, and encourage future applications for external funding. Projects should support and advance a faculty member's scholarship and research agenda. Proposals that focus on pedagogy or student experiential learning are not eligible for Excel funding.

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include faculty (tenure and non-tenure track) in liberal arts, humanities, and social science disciplines working at USC Columbia or any of the Palmetto College campuses (Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union, and Palmetto College Columbia sites).
- Principal Investigators may only submit one proposal to this competition as project lead.
- Proposals may include multiple investigators, but one investigator must be designated as the project lead.
- Faculty funded previously through this program as lead PIs are not eligible to submit as lead PIs for this round.
- Faculty may resubmit a revised proposal that was not funded in the previous funding cycle. *Please see the Application Procedure below for additional guidelines for resubmissions.*

Funds Available and Project Period: Projects may be funded up to $18,000. An applicant may request a project period of up to 15 months beginning May 1, 2024. Under certain conditions and with justification, exceptions to these dates may be requested.

Budget Information: Budgets will be presented in general categories and require detailed explanations. While the intention is to fund projects as closely as possible to the requested amount, grant awards may be reduced depending on the number of proposals received and the funds available. Cost share is not allowed.

Allowable costs
- 1 month of summer salary <u>or</u> (*for tenured and tenure-track only; and one semester only*) 1 course buyout for project research personnel + fringe benefits (Course buyout rates vary by AND requires approval of applicant's college/school; *please consult your department/college business manager*)
- Salary and fringe benefits for graduate and undergraduate students working on the project
- Graduate student tuition
- Travel essential to conduct the project
- Project supplies
- Publication and/or dissemination costs
- Travel to professional meetings, exhibitions, performances, etc. to present scholarly and creative work resulting from this grant
- Consultants and/or contractors

Unallowable costs
- Costs in connection with faculty degree requirements
- Laptops and desktop computers

- Food (for use in research, as subject incentives, related to project events or activities, etc.; *only travel per diem permitted*)
- Undergraduate student tuition

Application Procedure and Proposal Preparation: Please use 11-point readable font and 0.5-inch margins. <u>Assemble the following into a single PDF file</u>:

- <u>Title Page</u> with name of Lead investigator and home unit/department; names and units of other key personnel involved; a 100-word abstract or short summary that includes the purpose of the project, the proposed work to be accomplished, and potential impact. Please note, the abstracts for all funded projects may be published on the Office of the Vice President for Research's website.
- <u>Proposal Narrative</u>: no longer than 3 pages, including background on the project topic proposed, its significance and/or innovation in relation to the present state of knowledge in the field, specifics on the project objectives, research plan, tasks and methodologies, expected accomplishments and specific outcomes from the project (see Dissemination Plan notes below), and as appropriate, the theoretical and/or applied benefits that might be realized from the project. Include the anticipated project schedule/timeline and the roles and qualifications of the project participants.
- <u>Bibliography</u> (no page limit)
- <u>CV/resume</u> (max 2 pages for each faculty member) that includes:
    - Education
    - Professional experience
    - Evidence of scholarship: most significant refereed journal articles, books, book chapters, etc.
    - Significant accomplishments and contributions
    - Other information as appropriate
    Please do not format the CV/Resume as a narrative biographical statement.
- <u>Current and pending support form</u> Include current grant funding and pending grant funding using <u>this form</u> (also on the program website).
- <u>Budget form</u> A detailed budget <u>on this form</u> (also on the program website) with budget justification for all project costs consistent with the list of allowable costs above.
- <u>Appendices</u> are allowed if highly relevant (e.g. letters of support); however, do not use appendices to circumvent page limits.
- <u>Resubmissions</u> Investigators may resubmit proposals that were not funded previously by Excel. Resubmissions need to include a one-page (max) response to the reviewers (attached after the cover page), and a copy of the reviewer comments in the appendices.

Dissemination Plan: The Excel program is intended to facilitate the production of scholarly and creative works. Once complete, grant recipients are expected to share their work with a broad audience through a publication, presentation, exhibition, performance, etc. Applicants should clearly state/describe how this work will be shared, demonstrate where they are in their timeline towards completion, and how this grant will help to reach that goal on time. The VPR website will have a webpage dedicated to showcasing the scholarly and creative work resulting from this grant program, where each recipient can share their work through articles, images, and videos.

Submission: The proposal receipt date is 5:00pm on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, submitted via USCeRA by checking *yes* to "Internal Request," then "Vice President for Research" and choosing the request type "Excel Funding Program" from the USCeRA drop-down menu to ensure proper proposal routing. Failure to check the box will result in your proposal NOT being submitted. *Upload your proposal into USCeRA as a single PDF.* <u>This USCeRA submission guide may be helpful</u>.

Review Process: Applications that are complete and responsive will be evaluated by a review panel. Reviewers will prioritize their recommendations based on the quality of the proposals in accordance with the review criteria below. Recommendations will be reviewed by the President and VPR, who will make final funding decisions.

Review Criteria:

- Does the proposal provide a compelling argument for the funding?
- To what extent do the proposed activities explore creative, original, or innovative concepts with the potential to advance knowledge in the field of study?
- Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale with clear statements of overall project objectives, actions, and expected outcomes?
- Are there clear strategies to monitor and improve planned actions, and to evaluate the achievement of desired outcomes?
- Is there a timeline, and is it realistic?
- How will the findings/outcomes be reported? Is there a clearly defined and discipline appropriate dissemination plan?
- Is the text clearly comprehensible to other academic scholars, some of whom may not be experts in the applicant's field of study?
- How well qualified is the individual, team, or organization to conduct the proposed activities?
- If applicable, does the project have the necessary support from all relevant stakeholders?
- If relevant, is there evidence for strong interdisciplinary collaboration in developing the project?

For more information: Please contact Beth Herron or Julie Morris, Research and Grant Development Office, bherron@mailbox.sc.edu or jamorris@mailbox.sc.edu.