

# RCAF Proposal Guidelines

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the TCU Research and Creative Activities Fund (RCAF) is to provide financial support to enable full-time instructors, professors of professional practice, tenure-track and tenured faculty members to engage in research or pursue artistry that will make a significant contribution to the individual's discipline. The concepts of research and creative activity are viewed in a broad scope and the intent of the RCAF is to support meritorious projects from all divisions of the University. Applications focusing on:

- 1) The scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL),
- 2) Humanistic research and efforts that result in the creation of artistic or humanist bodies of work, and
- 3) Applications focused on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-based research efforts

will be reviewed by separate committees.

The major goal of the program is to provide initial seed money that enables the investigator to:

- Do the preliminary work that precedes proposal submission for extramural funding; or
- Support the gathering of preliminary results for resubmission of applications for which extramural funding was sought but not awarded; or
- Pursue scholarly research and creative activities for which external funding is limited or not available; or
- Conduct a systemic investigation into student learning with the purpose of developing novel teaching methodologies and practices that can measurably enhance student learning outcomes and advance the practice of teaching and public dissemination of inquiry findings.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

RCAF Investigators must:

1. Hold a full-time faculty appointment, tenure, tenure-track, professor of professional practice or instructor appointment to TCU; and
2. Have filed timely final reports on all previously awarded internal grants (except for active awards). If an applicant has outstanding reports due under the RCAF program or other institutional seed grant programs, they will be ineligible to receive any future seed grant awards **and the application will not be reviewed.**

The grant funding period is June 1 through the following May 31.

Awards are limited to a maximum of \$4,500 (not including faculty salaries for the Junior Faculty Summer Research Program or including the \$1500 Student Mentorship supplement). Funding requests for less than \$500 are not encouraged as they are better funded from departmental resources and may not be competitive.

Only one proposal can be submitted by an individual in any given year.

Multiple proposals for the same project may receive only one award, regardless of the number of faculty involved.

Project can only receive funding once. However, one additional request for funding is acceptable to support the gathering of additional preliminary results for resubmission of application for extramural funding (reviewers' comments must be provided as an Appendix).

## **DEADLINE DATES FOR SPRING 2021**

Proposal due date: February 19, 2021

Grant awards announced: April 5th, 2021

Project start date: June 1, 2021

## **PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION**

Proposals are to be prepared according to the guidelines. One pdf file containing the complete submission should be submitted electronically to the Office of Sponsored Programs at [SponsoredPrograms@tcu.edu](mailto:SponsoredPrograms@tcu.edu) by the deadline specified in the call for proposals.

PDF document includes these items in this order:

- RCAF Grant Application Form—this serves as the cover sheet and includes appropriate chair and dean approvals
- Project Narrative—prepared according to guidelines and no more than 5 pages
- **Record of Scholarly/Artistic Activities**
- Budget Form—includes template and justifications
- Appendices
- If you are applying for the Student Mentorship Supplement, include the Mentorship Plan and Budget Justification at the end of the application

Proposals must be reviewed and approved by chair and dean of applicant's unit before submission.

Applications must be prepared using font size of 11 points or larger. Smaller text in graphs, tables, figures, diagrams and charts is acceptable, as long as it is legible when the page is being viewed at 100%. Please use a standard, widely accepted font. We recommend a serif-type font. Narrative must be double spaced. Abstract and Budget justifications may be single spaced. Legibility is of paramount importance.

We do not require a specific citation format.

Applicants should be sure to address each section of the narrative completely and concisely.

Reviewers are instructed to score a missing section with 0 points.

Proposals may be reviewed by colleagues from a different discipline. You must present the details and importance of the research and artistic activity in language that will be clear to a well-educated individual outside your field of specialization. Remember that reviewers may be from any college in the University and may not understand jargon-laden terminology specific to your area of specialization.

## **PROJECT NARRATIVE**

The project narrative, comprised of the purpose, background, methods and professional development, is completed using the sections described below. Project narrative (not counting appendices, and budget form) should not exceed 5 pages.

- **Purpose/Goal of Project**

In a brief opening paragraph, clearly state the purpose and goals of your project—what do you intend to accomplish and/ produce from this work?

- **Background, Significance and References**

- 1) Provide an adequate review of pertinent previous work or literature to define how your project fits into the current state of research, knowledge or artistry.
- 2) Explain why the project is needed. For example, does your project demonstrate a novel approach or new techniques, explores previously unknown source material, fill a major gap in the knowledge base of your discipline, and/or make substantive contributions to or advance the field of study or area of artistry?
- 3) Provide references/bibliography using a format appropriate for your discipline. Include a list of all references cited in the application and any additional key sources that have informed your main argument.

- **Method/Approach**

What means, procedures, techniques will you use to accomplish your goals (e.g. experimental method, archival data collection, interpretive reading, interviews, surveys, comparative method etc.)? For whatever method you employ, justify your method and explain in detail how you will conduct your investigation or creative activity. Explain how the proposed approach is expected to lead to the achievement of your project goals and what you expect will result from the work. **Important:** If your work involves animals or human subjects, you must address the ethical and regulatory issues related to your project and whether or not you have obtained IRB and/or IACUC approval. No funds will be distributed without relevant IRB and/or IACUC approval.

- **Professional Development**

Describe how this project will contribute to your scholarship and/or artistic development. For example, the project will:

- Enable you to competitively seek external funding to support future work;
- Lead to a publication, exhibition, presentation, performance and/or other appropriate scholarly product or creation; and/or
- Produce specific professional outcomes that are beneficial to your scholarship and/or creative activity.

### **Record of Scholarly/Artistic Activities (limited to 3 pages)**

1) Provide a record of your scholarly activities (publications, presentations, performances, exhibitions, external funding) for the previous three to five years. Reviewers expect to see a history of active engagement in artistry, scholarship and/or evidence that experience sufficient for accomplishing this project, whether as a continuation of your current line of inquiry or as a new line of inquiry (this should tie back to your Professional Development section).

2) If you have had prior RCAF/JFSRP support in the past, briefly describe the project/s. Does the proposal you are currently submitting 1) seek funding to support gathering of additional information in response to a previously reviewed external sponsored project (please attach reviewers' comments as an Appendix) or 2) is independent of previously supported RCAF/JFSRP projects (if so, how)? (NOTE: If you have not had any prior RCAF/JFSRP support, please also state that. It will not count against you in the scoring.)

### **Budget and Budget Justification (See Form)**

Your budget should be clearly described. Each area of expenditure should be described. If pricing seems out of the ordinary, please explain. Each area of expenditure should clearly relate to the proposed activities and be clearly necessary to those activities. The overall cost of the project should be reasonable. This information goes into the Budget Form, which includes the Budget Spreadsheet and Justification. The budget form does not count against the 5 page maximum.

### **Appendices (Optional; except for reviewer comments, if applicable)**

You may provide up to three appendices of pertinent supporting materials. These materials should clarify important aspects of the work, but not duplicate the narrative. They should not be used to circumvent length restrictions on the proposal. Examples of appendices would be such things as survey instruments, letters of collaboration from co-investigators, lengthy budget justifications, copies of catalog pages, or vendor bids for high-cost items in your budget, and such.

-----

## **BUDGET GUIDANCE**

- Expenditures must be justified.
- When possible, include cost estimates from intended vendors, especially for high-cost items.
- Requests for equipment (including computers) must be documented and include:
  - An explanation of why the equipment is vital to the proposed project;
  - Why equipment available on campus is not sufficient to meet the needs of the project; and
  - A plan for disposition of the equipment at the end of the project.
- Requests for publication costs must be documented and include:
  - a letter from a publisher and a justification for associated publication costs as it pertains to research, or
  - documentation of author fees assessed by an open-access journal.
- Funds will not be provided for:
  - Travel that is not directly related to the conduct of the proposed research or creative activity, for example, travel to attend a conference;
  - Completion or publication of dissertations;
  - Faculty salaries (Except pre-tenure, tenure-track faculty salaries for the Junior Faculty Summer Research Program); and
  - Support of graduate students who are already receiving fellowships or assistantships.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

It is the ultimate responsibility of the principal investigator on each project to assure that available grant resources are used judiciously to accomplish the objectives specified in the proposal and that expenditures remain within the approved budget.

Funds approved for one purpose may not be used for another purpose without prior approval of the Director of Sponsored Programs.

The Office of Sponsored Programs must be notified if whole or partial support is received from other sources for approved budget items.

Awards will be issued on June 1, 2020. PI(s) must commit to giving a status report and presentation at the mid-point (6 month) and end (12 month) of the funding period. Continued funding will be available contingent upon satisfactory progress as presented at the mid-point (6 month) presentation. A final report on the project is due to the Director of Sponsored Programs within 60 days of the project completion or expiration of the funding award, whichever comes first. The report should describe in detail the progress made and the relevance of the project. The report should also include a listing of any publications, presentations or proposals to external funding agencies that were an outgrowth of the project. The status of submitted proposal(s) should also be included. The final report should also include a summary of how student mentorship supplemental support benefited the educational experience of the student, if applicable. Failure to submit the report or lack of appropriate progress may result in cancellation of project activities and funding. Upon completion of RCAF sponsored activity, the project lead must present their work at a seminar or workshop organized by the university (venue to be determined). Funding is made at the sole discretion of the Office of Research.

Funds not spent by the termination of the grant period revert to the RCAF account. However, purchase orders executed just prior to the end of the grant period will be honored even though requested items may not be received until after expiration of the grant. Investigators are encouraged to make purchases early in the grant period to avoid this situation.

Manuscripts submitted for publication, performances and/or exhibitions, etc., resulting from a project supported wholly or in part by the TCU/RCAF should include acknowledgement of that support. This statement is suggested: *“This work was supported in part by a grant from the TCU Research and Creative Activities Fund.”*

---

## STUDENT MENTORSHIP SUPPLEMENT

Faculty applicants are invited to apply for an additional \$1,500 to apply towards a student mentorship component of their application. These financial resources are intended to provide students with individualized research mentoring opportunities. *The faculty RCAF award (\$4500) must not depend on receipt of the student mentorship supplement; that is, it is possible that only the faculty portion will be awarded.*

The application for the student mentorship supplement should include a single-page plan that identifies research/mentoring goals and at least one activity (to be undertaken by the student and faculty member) that will accomplish each goal. There should also be an indication of the type and frequency of interaction between the mentor/mentee (e.g., weekly in-person meetings for the duration of the project).

A particular student does not need to be identified to participate in the mentored activities; however, the student's level (undergraduate or graduate, and program) must be indicated in the application. The supplement cannot support the activities students that are already receiving fellowships or assistantships. A student may be selected by the faculty investigator following receipt of the supplement, and that student and faculty mentor pair will be required to provide feedback on the experience at the end of the project period.

In addition to the single-page research mentorship plan, a one-page budget justification for the \$1500 supplement should also be included. This budget proposal should demonstrate how the \$1500 will be used in accomplishment of the research goals. Funds may be applied toward items such as: paying for a student's time to work in the lab (when the student otherwise may have had to seek another job to support his or her time), paying for materials for an additional research experience/experiment/ project that the student will complete as a part of the mentor's project, travel expenses to present information, travel expenses to attend a training, or travel expenses to visit a collaborating laboratory or faculty member. The final report should include a summary of how this supplemental support benefited the educational experience of the student.