15.01.01.C0.01 Administration of the Research Enhancement Program

Revised: December 11, 2023
Next Scheduled Review: December 11, 2028
Revision History

Procedure Summary

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) participates in the Research Enhancement Program and adheres to the requirements set by the State of Texas. The purpose of this procedure is to state the guidelines and processes which will be followed by TAMU-CC in allocating Research Enhancement Program funds. The University Research Enhancement Review Panel (URERP) is responsible for evaluating grant proposals and recommending grant awards for this program.

Procedure

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1987, The 70th Texas Legislature established the Research Enhancement Program [V.T.C.A. Education Code Section 141.001 et.seq.]. The program is in effect at TAMU-CC and at other Texas public senior colleges and universities. The Research Enhancement Program statute requires each participating institution to:

(a) develop guidelines and processes to use in selecting the research projects to be funded,

(b) appoint a faculty committee to review research proposals submitted for consideration and to select the projects to be funded according to the guidelines and processes established by that institution, and

(c) provide awards on a competitive basis.

2. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT REVIEW PANEL

The URERP is chaired by a representative from the division of Research and Innovation who serves as a non-voting member and provides administrative support to the Research Enhancement Program. The URERP membership criteria and roster

are both published on the official university committees and councils webpage. The URERP is responsible for receiving and evaluating grant proposals and recommending grant awards from Research Enhancement Program funds.

3. ACADEMIC UNIT RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEES

Each academic unit (e.g., college, school, library) eligible to receive funds as outlined in section 5.1 of this procedure, will create an Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee consisting of the academic unit's two (2) representatives to the URERP and as many other faculty members elected by that academic unit as deemed necessary. Each of these committees is responsible for receiving and evaluating grant proposals and recommending grant awards from the research funds designated for the academic unit in accordance with the academic unit policies on awarding Research Enhancement Program funds. Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee policies and award processes must be consistent with the eligibility and award selection criteria outlined in the statute. A copy of each academic unit policy must be filed with the Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation (EVPR).

4. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

4.1. Annually, money appropriated for the Research Enhancement Program will be allocated in the following manner:

Sixty (60) percent of the Research Enhancement Program funds appropriated by the legislature will be administered at the university level by the URERP. The other forty (40) percent of the funds will be distributed to the academic units to fund academic unit-level research enhancement projects. Half of the academic unit-level funds will be divided equally among the academic units. The other half will be apportioned among the academic units according to the number of tenured and tenure track faculty teaching in each academic unit during the previous fall semester.

4.2. Academic unit-level research grants normally fund small scale projects that usually do not involve release time from instructional duties. University-level research grants normally fund larger scale projects that may involve funded release time from instructional duties.

5. ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

5.1. The Research Enhancement Program statute defines a faculty member as a "person who is tenured or in a tenure-track position and is employed by a public senior college or university." Only members of the TAMU-CC faculty who meet these criteria at the time of proposal submission are eligible to apply for Research Enhancement Program funds. Only academic units with

tenured/tenure-track faculty are eligible for academic unit-level Research Enhancement Program funds.

5.2. Only research projects that meet the criteria set forth for "Scholarship and Creative Activity" in university procedure *12.01.99.C0.04, Descriptions of Teaching, Librarianship, Scholarship and Creative Activity, and Service*, may be supported by Research Enhancement Program funds.

5.3. Grants awarded from these research funds may not duplicate funds awarded from other granting agencies.

5.4. Research Enhancement Program funds may not be used to support the doctoral dissertation research of the principal investigator.

5.5. Funding for the same, or substantially the same, research project may not be received from both the URERP and Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee.

5.6. To avoid conflict of interest, no member of the URERP may submit a grant proposal at the university level. Likewise, no member of the Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee may submit a grant proposal at the academic unit level. A panel/committee member who wishes to do so must resign their panel/committee position. In addition, any potential conflicts of interest, including those of any co-principal investigators, senior personnel, or collaborators, must be addressed prior to the review of the proposals.

5.7. In order to support the research efforts of as many faculty members as possible, an eligible faculty member may be awarded only one research enhancement award as a principal investigator every two (2) years at the university level.

5.8. Research Enhancement Program grants are made with the understanding that the grant recipient will continue employment with TAMU-CC for at least the academic year following the awarding of the grant. Grant recipients who elect to leave employment at TAMU-CC at the end of the academic year during which they have been awarded a grant will be expected to decline their summer award.

6. TIMELINE FOR SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF UNIVERSITY-LEVEL RESEARCH PROPOSALS

6.1. Timeline

- December 1st – Request issued for research proposals for the following academic year

- March 1st – Deadline for submitting university-level research proposals
- April 15th – University-level proposals recommended for funding are announced to recipients

If research enhancement awards are not fully expended during the Spring call, a second call may be announced for a Fall competition at the discretion of the EVPR.

6.2. The research enhancement committees may consider grant applications submitted after the official deadline and petitions to fund grant cost overruns. Such consideration, however, is contingent on available funds and will be given lower priority than applications filed by the deadline.

6.3. Official notification of university-level grant awards will be made in writing by the EVPR. Official notification of academic unit-level grant awards will be made in writing by the dean/director of the academic unit.

7. GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

7.1. Faculty members who wish to submit proposals for university-level grants may obtain an application from the Office of the EVPR. Copies of previously funded university-level projects are available for inspection by those who wish to review them as examples, after permission has been requested from the principal investigator.

7.2. When submitting a Research Enhancement Program grant proposal to the URERP, the applicant should remember that it will be reviewed and evaluated by knowledgeable colleagues outside the applicant's own field of specialization. Therefore, the applicant should avoid unnecessary jargon and strive for clarity in presentation.

7.3. Specific application instructions are included in each call for proposal. The grant application, in general, includes the following information:

(a) A title page including project title, name of the principal investigator (and co-investigators, if any),

(b) A statement by the appropriate department chair/supervisor and academic unit dean/director indicating that if the project is funded, proposed release time from instructional duties will be granted,

(c) If the research project involves human subjects, vertebrate animals, or biological agents, indication that appropriate review has been requested from the Institutional Review Board, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, or Institutional Biosafety Committee,

respectively, is required. Awards cannot be made until the proposed project has received clearance from the Office of Research Compliance in the form of an exemption, clearance, or approval,

(d) If the activities involve a high-risk global engagement, international collaboration, or the potential for a financial conflict of interest, then the activity must be reviewed by TAMU-CC's Financial Conflict of Interest and Export Control Officer.

(e) A statement of the research objective(s) and/or hypotheses,

(f) A discussion of the significance of the project to the advancement of knowledge in the field,

(g) A work plan including discussion of research methodology, expected results, interpretation of results, and expected timeline,

(h) All expected research products (scholarly meeting presentations, articles, exhibitions, etc.) including plans to present results to the external scholarly community as well as plans to seek additional external funding, where appropriate,

(i) A project budget,

(j) A two-page curriculum vitae of the principal investigator and any co-investigators, including the titles of any previous University Research Enhancement grants awarded, and

(k) If applicable, evidence of prior funding results from the Academic Unit and University Research Enhancement Fund or external funding should be provided. Examples might include articles, presentations, exhibits, or posters.

8. GRANT PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

When evaluating Research Enhancement Program grant applications, the URERP considers both the scholarly merit and feasibility of the project. Included in such consideration are such issues as:

(a) the project's adherence to the criteria for "scholarship" in University Procedure *12.01.99.C0.04, Descriptions of Teaching, Librarianship, Scholarship and Creative Activity, and Service*,

(b) overall clarity of the research proposal,

(c) soundness of the research methodology,

(d) indication that the project will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field,

(e) potential that the project will result in a research product that will be presented to the external scholarly community in the field,

(f) reasonableness of the work plan,

(g) appropriateness of the proposed budget in terms of the work plan and anticipated outcomes, and

(h) the record of previous project completion and budget management in the case of applicants who have previously been awarded Research Enhancement Program grants.

In addition, priority will be given to new and early-career faculty members and to faculty members who are conducting work in new areas.

9. ACTIONS BY THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT PANEL AND ACADEMIC UNIT RESEARCH ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

9.1. The following actions may be taken by the URERP and Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee:

(a) The proposal may be funded as presented.

(b) The proposal may be partially funded.

(c) The proposal may be funded contingent upon changes by the investigator.

(d) The proposal may not be funded.

9.2. During review and deliberation, the research panel/committee may request additional information or clarification from the principal investigator and may consult with specialists in the field.

9.3. The panel and committee are strongly encouraged to provide constructive feedback to all applicants addressing the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals. Written reviews should advise on how to strengthen the proposed work and its impact.

9.4. At both the university and academic unit level, whenever possible, at least two (2) additional meritorious proposals of those not funded should be ranked for possible funding in the event that such funding becomes available at a later date.

10. INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

The statute provides that supplies, materials, services, and equipment purchased under the Research Enhancement Program are not subject to the authority of the State Purchasing and General Services Commission. All grants are also subject to applicable university expenditure guidelines outlined below.

10.1. Administrative Support: Administrative support and budget tracking are provided to both university-level grant and academic unit-level grant recipients by the academic unit budget offices.

10.2. Expenditure Deadlines: In compliance with university fiscal procedures, the funds will be encumbered and disbursed in accordance with the university expenditure deadlines. University-level research enhancement funds may not be carried over past the end of the fiscal year (August 31) for which the grant was awarded. Academic unit-level research enhancement carry-overs are at the discretion of the academic units' heads.

10.3. Equipment: When a faculty research grant has been completed or terminated, any equipment purchased by the grant remains the property of the university. Books or similar research materials purchased by a research enhancement grant will revert to the university library upon completion of the project. The recipient of the grant, however, will retain rights to use the equipment until s/he leaves the university or no longer needs the equipment.

10.4. Travel: Any travel permitted with these funds must comply with university guidelines regarding travel. Administrative support in travel matters is provided by the academic unit budget office for both academic unit-level grants and university-level grants.

10.5. Research Assistants: In accordance with the provisions of the grant as approved by the URERP or Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee, the grant holder may employ students and others as research assistants. Administrative support in employment and payroll matters is provided by the academic unit budget office for both academic unit-level grants and university-level grants.

10.6. Progress Reports: A written progress report may be required as determined by the URERP and Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee. These reports, along with any other relevant materials, will become a part of the permanent record of the research project.

10.7. Final Report: A formal written report is required upon completion of each funded research project. This report includes a summary of the project's design, findings, conclusions, expenditures, and any scholarly manuscripts,

presentations, or publications produced. The report will be filed with the chair of the URERP. This report should include an appropriate title page and be bound in a manner durable enough for permanent filing and easy retrieval. The value of the final report cannot be overemphasized since it is an integral part of the permanent record of the project. It is available to accrediting and other supervisory agents, and the URERP or Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee in determining the grantee's capabilities for subsequent grants.

The final report is due October 1st following completion of the funding period. If the report cannot be submitted by this date, the principal investigator may request an extension from the EVPR. The request for extension must state the reasons for the delay, and when the report will be submitted.

10.8. Publicity: The responsibility for publicity relating to faculty research grants approved, or in progress, rests with the Office of Public Affairs.

10.9. Acknowledgment of Support: Recipients of faculty research grants are encouraged to submit their research findings for publication. Acknowledgment should be included in the publication stating that the project received financial support through a TAMU-CC Research Enhancement Program grant. Researchers should supply a copy of the published materials to the chair of the UREP where it will become a part of the project record and can be made available to members of the URERP and Academic Unit Research Enhancement Committee.

10.10. Intellectual Property: Any copyrights, patents, or royalties resulting from research done under a faculty research grant are subject to the university rules and procedures and the Texas A&M University System policies and regulations regarding intellectual property.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

System Policy *15.01, Research Agreements*
System Regulation *15.01.01, Sponsored Agreements – Research and Other*
University Procedure *12.01.99.C0.04, Descriptions of Teaching, Librarianship, Scholarship and Creative Activity, and Service*
University Procedure *15.01.01.C0.02, Administration of Sponsored Agreements*

This procedure supersedes:

- *15.01.01.C1.01, Administration of Research Enhancement Program*
- *15.01.01.C0.01, Administration of Research Enhancement Program*

Contact Office

Contact for clarification and interpretation:	Executive Vice President for Research and Innovation 361.825.3881