Faculty Research and Equipment Awards Program

Policies and Guidelines
Updated February 2019

General Information
The University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF) is a nonprofit, publicly supported foundation that raises funds to support research and education in the UMN Medical School. The Medical School/UMF Faculty Research and Equipment Awards Program is supported by funds raised by UMF.

The Medical School Research Council reviews all applications and makes funding decisions for research and equipment awards.

Eligibility
Eligibility is limited to departmental faculty who hold full-time salaried positions in the University of Minnesota Medical School at the rank of Assistant Professor or above (see additional eligibility criteria for the specific funding opportunities described below). This excludes residents, medical fellow specialists, non-salaried clinical or research faculty, research assistants, research associates, community physicians hired in the “Professional” category, etc. Applications are screened upon receipt.

A faculty member can only be PI on one application per deadline (e.g., a faculty member cannot submit an application for new Assistant Professor funding and Equipment funding for a single deadline). Furthermore, a faculty member cannot apply for a new UMF grant if they are a PI of an active UMF grant.

If you have questions about eligibility, contact Rosalyn Segal at rsegal@umn.edu before preparing a grant application.

Application Guidelines
The application must be completed online using the following link: MS/UMF Award Program Application. The same form is used for all application categories. If you have questions, contact the Vice Dean’s Office at rsegal@umn.edu.

Applications for Assistant Professor Startup and Equipment Funding are received and reviewed two times a year subject to availability of funds. Applications must be received electronically by 4 p.m. on the dates listed below. These dates are firm. Applications that arrive late will not be reviewed or, if requested, held over for the next deadline.

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<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Notification</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Late May</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>Late November</td>
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When a deadline falls on a weekend, the deadline is 4 p.m. on the next business day.
NEW: Applications for Bridge Funding now have **four** deadlines/year, as follows:

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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>Late April</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>Late July</td>
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<td>September 15</td>
<td>Late October</td>
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<td>December 15</td>
<td>Late January</td>
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Research that involves human subjects/human tissue, animal subjects, or biohazardous materials must be approved by the appropriate University of Minnesota oversight committee. An application will be reviewed if approval is pending, but funds will not be released in support of an award until documentation of approval has been provided. For further information please go to the following links:

c. Biohazardous materials: [Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)](http://iris.umn.edu/)

**Application Link:** [MS/UMF Award Program Application](https://iris.umn.edu/)

**Categories of Support**
1) Assistant Professor Startup Funding
2) Equipment Funding
3) Bridge Funding
1) Assistant Professor Startup Funding

Eligibility: All Assistant Professors are eligible, but individuals can only be recipients of this funding category once during their time as an Assistant Professor. The purpose of this funding category is to support individuals who have demonstrated or show promise of developing an academic research program, and whose ideas are of sufficient scope and creativity that they have good prospects of attracting additional funding at the national level.

a. Completed application form

b. Project description: The maximum length is 2 pages (excluding references), with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. Preliminary data can be included, but must fit within the two-page limit. The description should include:
   i) A short introduction stating the problem and summarizing the literature.
   ii) A statement of the hypothesis and specific aims.
   iii) A description of the experimental plan and methods.
   iv) Anticipated results and an explanation of how an award will facilitate a competitive application for a federal/national award.

c. NIH biosketch of PI and no more than two co-investigators, if applicable. The biosketch must follow the format that includes “contributions to science.”

d. Current and pending funding: On a separate page list all available funding for the PI. For each grant or pending application list: funding agency, PI, grant title, amount of direct costs/yr, and beginning/end of award period or proposed award period. This should include:
   i) currently funded and pending federal/national grants,
   ii) currently funded and pending internal grants (i.e., within UMN),
   iii) startup funds from department and/or Medical School,
   iv) endowed chair or professorship resources, and
   v) other UMF or Medical School accounts that could be used to support the research.

e. Budget: Describe the request on a separate page. The maximum request is $15,000 and requested items must be justified.
   Allowable costs: supplies and reagents, small pieces of equipment (<$2,000), shared resource charges (e.g., flow cytometry, CTSI, RAR), and partial salary support for technicians, undergraduate and graduate students, and postdocs. Participation payment to volunteer normal human subjects in an IRB-approved study is allowed.
   Unallowable costs: faculty salary, administrative assistant salary, student tuition, service contracts, travel to scientific meetings and conferences, publications costs, scientific society membership, and direct payments or reimbursements to patients receiving standard clinical care for any reason.

f. A letter of support from the department or division head. If the applicant is on the Academic Track (with a clinical focus) the letter of support must indicate the % effort the applicant has been accorded for research and scholarship.

g. Letter(s) of support from key collaborator(s) (maximum of two) if applicable. Do not include NIH biosketches from key collaborators.
2) Equipment Funding

Eligibility: All full-time faculty at the rank of Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor. Assistant professors who are early in establishing a research program, and who have not yet applied for Assistant Professor Startup Funding, are discouraged from applying. Applications must include:

a. Completed application form

b. Project description: The maximum length is 2 pages (excluding references), with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. The description should include:
   i) A description of the equipment item(s) being requested and why it(they) is(are) essential for the specific area(s) of research.
   ii) A brief description of the faculty research projects that would benefit.
   iii) Clarification that the item being requested is not available or accessible elsewhere in the medical school or AHC.
   iv) Clarification that costs have been explored and the item being requested represents the best overall value for the anticipated uses.
   v) Evidence of matching support from other sources (e.g., other research grants, department or center/institute matching funds, philanthropy).

c. NIH biosketch of the PI. The biosketch must follow the format that includes “contributions to science.”

d. Current and pending funding: On a separate page list all available funding for the PI. For each grant or pending application list: funding agency, PI, grant title, amount of direct costs/yr, and beginning/end of award period or proposed award period. This should include:
   i) currently funded and pending federal/national grants,
   ii) currently funded and pending internal grants (i.e., within UMN),
   iii) startup funds from department and/or Medical School,
   iv) endowed chair or professorship resources, and
   v) other UMF or Medical School accounts that could be used to support the research.

e. Budget: On a separate page describe the equipment being requested, the amount of support requested in the application, the total cost, and the source and dollar amount of contributions made by matching financial contributors. As a general rule, requests should not exceed $35,000.

f. Letters from individuals providing matching financial support (including department head).

g. Up to four letters from faculty whose research would benefit from the new equipment. It is not necessary to include NIH biosketches from these individuals.
3) Bridge Funding

Eligibility: The following circumstances fall within the eligibility criteria: 1) the applicant is PI of a currently funded NIH RO1 application (or similar national/federal grant) that has not achieved a fundable priority score during the initial competitive renewal application, and must be resubmitted as an A1 revised application, 2) the applicant is PI of a competitive renewal RO1 that failed at the A1 stage and is going to be submitted as a new (A0) RO1 application essentially addressing the same research question, c) the applicant is PI of a section on a currently funded program project (P-type award) that has not received a fundable priority score during the initial competitive renewal application, and must be resubmitted as an A1 revised application (this assumes that the PI had a section on the originally funded program project as well as a section on the competitive renewal). An application could also be submitted for a grant funded by the NIH multi-PI mechanism, but the two (or more) faculty on such a grant could only submit a single Bridge Fund application. In general, the summary statement should have been received within the past 12 months prior to the application

Applications that do not fall within these categories must be discussed with the Vice Dean for Research prior to submission. Applications must include:

a. Completed application form

b. Project description: The maximum length is 3 pages (excluding references), with 12-point font and 1-inch margins. The description should include:
   i) A description of the circumstance in the PI’s laboratory that necessitates the application for bridge funding.
   ii) A summary of the salient weaknesses/major criticisms described in the summary statement.
   iii) A description of how the PI will respond to the criticisms, i.e., precisely how will the PI respond during the bridge funding period, not a simple iteration of specific aims. Preliminary data can be included, but must fit within the 3-page limit.

c. NIH biosketch of PI and no more than two co-investigators, if applicable. The biosketch must follow the format that includes “contributions to science.”

d. Current and pending funding: On a separate page list all available funding for the PI. For each grant or pending application list agency, PI, title, amount of direct costs/year, and beginning/end of award period or proposed award period. This should include:
   i) currently funded and pending federal/national grants,
   ii) currently funded and pending internal grants (i.e., within UMN),
   iii) startup or retention funds from department and/or medical school,
   iv) endowed chair or professorship resources, and
   v) any other UMF or Medical School accounts that could be used to support the research.

e. Budget: Describe the request on a separate page. The applicant can request up to $75,000, but this amount will be awarded in only exceptional circumstances. It is expected that the applicant will receive some level of matching funds from other sources (e.g., department). Allowable costs are consistent with NIH guidelines and can include supplies and reagents, small pieces of equipment, shared resource charges (e.g., flow cytometry, CTSI, RAR), and
salary support for technical staff, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and research associates. Support for faculty salary is not allowed.

f. A letter of support from the department head outlining commitment of matching funds.

g. Letter(s) of support from key collaborator(s) (maximum of two), if applicable.

h. The NIH summary statement.

**Evaluation of Proposals**
The following questions are frequently asked when reviewers are evaluating Assistant Professor Startup applications and Bridge Fund applications.

1. Does the proposal address a significant research question(s)? Are the goals well defined?
2. Will the research yield novel information that could form the basis for an external application? Specific plans (including agency and date) for grant applications are very helpful in this regard.
3. Are the proposed methods appropriate to address the research questions? Are the specific aims clearly described and achievable in a one-year time frame?
4. Does the principal investigator possess sufficient expertise to perform the work proposed? Is there evidence of prior experience with the methodology involved and documentation of appropriate collaborative help?

The following questions are frequently asked when reviewers are evaluating Equipment applications.

1. What equipment is currently available to the investigator(s)? Is this equipment inaccessible or obsolete?
2. Will the equipment requested be broadly used? Is there evidence of sharing and effective collaboration by a group of researchers?
3. Can the principal investigator demonstrate that the equipment requested is truly needed?
4. Have matching funds been obtained from research grants, the PI’s department, or other sources?

**Terms of Support and Payment**
Projects are supported for a one-year period. Requests for a no cost extension beyond this period will only be considered in highly unusual circumstances (e.g., delay in IRB approval). A brief final report must be received for all awards within one month of the completion of the award period. Award recipients must notify the Medical School if an award for the same project is made by another agency. The Medical School will either negotiate cost sharing or request reimbursement. Awards will be paid to Medical School departments through the Medical School Finance Office. Funds must be used within the one-year period of the award. After the award expires, unexpended funds revert to the Medical School.
Reporting
Principal Investigators are required to provide a final progress report and an accounting of all funds expended within 30 days after the completion of the project. The report should be submitted electronically using the following online form: MS/UMF Final Report.

The report will include the following:

1. PI name, project title, and funding dates
2. Brief summary of results and future plans for the project
3. Future funding planned, pending or awarded, including names of sponsors
4. Peer-reviewed papers published, in press or under review resulting from this work
5. Disclosures or IP filed with the Office of Technology Commercialization resulting from this work