

**Research Initiation Grants
Virginia State University
2006-2007**



Overview

As Virginia State University moves forward in the 21st century, it must continue to evolve and expand those activities that contribute to academic excellence and the highest level of scholarship on the part of faculty. Research and scholarship are integral components of these activities. Very often, faculty need a pilot or start-up phase to initiate their research activities; during this phase, there is frequently the requirement for financial support or other resources. Yet, the university has in the past had no direct mechanism to promote the initiation of research projects. The Research Initiation Grants (RIG) program is a new program at VSU intended to serve this purpose.

Purpose

The explicit purpose of the RIG program is to assist in the initiation of research activities, which will directly lead to the preparation of grant proposals. The long-range intent of the RIG is to increase the extramural funding base of the institution. To achieve this, the short-range goal is to promote grant proposal preparation and submission. Thus, the RIG program will support research activities, which lead to the development of research grants. While the university values all research as an enterprise and values continuing research projects, RIG is not intended to support any or all research, nor to support necessarily on-going projects. The RIG program is intended to cultivate new fundable grant proposals which may have potential positive impact on the academic environment of the university.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for a RIG, a person must hold a full-time appointment as a tenure-tract faculty member at the University. While there are individuals with varying types of appointments and even combinations of different types of appointments, this is a general guideline, which will be followed; however, consideration will be given to exceptions on an individual basis under unusual circumstances.

Mechanism of Operation

In the announcement, submission, review and awarding of RIG's, the following sequence of events will transpire:

1. A solicitation notice or announcement for the RIG program will be distributed campus-wide in late spring to early fall.
2. A concise project description of no more than 5 pages (excluding appendices and curriculum vitae) must be submitted by the faculty member by the established deadline. The project description must contain 3 parts – a description of the research activities, proposed budget, and how the supported activities will lead directly to the submission of a proposal for external funding.

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3. All submitted project descriptions will be reviewed by a broad-based faculty committee and recommendations for funding made to the Provost by an established deadline.
4. Notification of funded RIGs (and non-funded) will be provided to faculty members by the Provost's Office by a set deadline.
5. The faculty member must perform the complete research activities and expend all awarded funds within the fiscal year.
6. At the mid point of the project, the faculty member must submit a 1-2 page progress report describing the success (es) and challenges resulting from the project. If sufficient progress cannot be demonstrated at this point, the Provost will order the termination of the project.
7. At the conclusion of the fiscal year and completion of all activities, the faculty member must submit a 1-2 page final report, which should include an electronic version suitable for publication in a VSU electronic database that would be searchable worldwide. In addition, the faculty member must make an oral presentation (15-20 minutes) or poster presentation that would showcase the research accomplishments at local, regional or national professional meetings. The final report must address 2 components – a description of the work performed and further details of the plan for proposal development and submission.

All of the events in one cycle of the RIG program will occur within the same fiscal/academic year. The deadline date for each step will be given in the initial announcement for that year.

Range of Activities Supported

As stated, the primary focus of RIG's is to support and promote grant development. While the endeavor that would most directly lead to this may be pilot research projects, fairly, broad latitude will be given in the consideration of activities to be supported. Any activity (release time, matching funds, etc.) that can be reasonably demonstrated to lead to grant submission or enhance the probability of obtaining external funding can be appropriate for support.

Selection Criteria

Consistent with the purpose of the RIG program, the following criteria will be used in the awarding of funds:

- Probability or potential to directly produce future funding (25%)
- Novelty and innovation of the project (20%)
- Clarity and the thoroughness of the project description (15%)
- Adequacy of the goals, objectives, and methodology (10%)
- Qualification of the project investigator(s), past performance at doing research, and previous track record for obtaining extramural funds (10%)
- Significance of the project, including the broader impact, extent of participation by graduate and undergraduate students in specific research, training and educational activities, institutional research goals and priorities (10%)
- Adequacy and justification of the budget (10%)

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General Information

The RIG program will operate on an annual basis with new awards made each year. The deadline dates for each year will be given in the general University-wide announcement. The eligibility criteria are as stated above, and a faculty member may submit only one RIG proposal per year. If a submission is not funded in one year, it may be resubmitted the next year following relevant and thoughtful corrective changes that address comments/feedback by previous reviewers; however, a faculty member will not be eligible for the RIG program if they had a project funded through this program in the previous year. Thus, while it is possible to receive more than one RIG award, the same person as the principal investigator can obtain only one award within a 2-year period. Also, while previous track record in research and funding are selection criteria, a RIG may also be used as seed funding by new faculty to initiate their research and develop external funding opportunities. This will specifically be given consideration in the award selection process.

Grants funded under RIG program are subject to all applicable state and Federal laws and regulations regarding the protection of human and animal subjects. At the time of their applications, faculty members are strongly encouraged to submit additional copies of their proposals and the appropriate forms from the Office of Sponsored Research and Programs to the VSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for the applicable review. This would minimize unnecessary delays in receiving an approved award because the grantee will be required to show documentation of appropriate IRB or IACUC approval before an award can be issued.

It is anticipated that RIG awards will average approximately \$10,000, with 8-10 awarded each year depending on the availability of funds. Budgets, which exceed this funding will be considered, but must be strongly justified.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Please, use the following major headings to organize the Research Plan, which should be **limited to 5 single-spaced pages, 12-point font and 1 inch margin. Graphs, charts, CVs and appendix do not count toward this limitation**

1. A Project Summary (25-50 word summary that captures the central theme of the project)

2. Specific Aims

This section should include a list of:

- The broad, long-range goals of the project
- Measurable objectives to accomplish the goals, including potential impact
- The overall hypotheses to be tested

3. Background and Significance

This section should contain:

- A precise description of the background information related to the present project

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- A critical evaluation of existing knowledge, including a rationale or needs statement for the project identifying the gaps, which the proposed project is intended to fill
 - Strong evidence of the novelty and/or innovation of the project including any available, and relevant preliminary data demonstrating feasibility
4. **Research Design and Methods**
 - Should be able to test the proposed hypotheses and/or answer the research questions
 - Should be realistic and directly relevant to addressing each of the specific aims
 5. **Data Analysis Strategies**
 - Briefly describe the types of analyses that will be conducted to answer the proposed research questions.
 6. **Research Implementation Plan**
 - Briefly describe the project tasks or activities for the expected duration of the project, including how each activity will be accomplished and the timelines for accomplishing the activity, as well as potential obstacles or problems that may occur and how these would be addressed as results unfold.
 - Identify all critical resources, both human and physical, available to execute the study (e.g., staff, space, equipment and data).
 7. **Management Plan**
 - Briefly describe the specific roles and responsibilities of all key staff, including the time each person has been projected to spend on each project task.
 - Briefly describe how the project will be managed, including the organizational structure for the project.
 - Attach, in an appendix, documents showing strong evidence of internal and/or external collaboration, including written agreements/letters of support that specify the roles and responsibilities of each party.
 8. **Budgets and Justification**
 - Provide a detailed line item budget with brief justification and/or explanation for the requested items, including salary, student stipend, consultant fee, equipment, supplies, travel, and contractual services.
 9. **Capacity Building, Sustainability and Dissemination**
 - How will the project enhance the capacity of VSU/PI to conduct future related research?
 - How will this line of research be extended upon completion of the awarded RIG and, in particular, what alternative and applicable sources of funding will be sought to successfully sustain the research?
 - What mechanisms will be used to disseminate the results or products of the research investment?

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10. Animal and Human Subjects (not included in the 5 page limit)

- For human subjects, briefly describe their proposed involvement.
- For animal subjects, briefly describe the proposed use of animals.

11. Relevant Literature (5 to 10 key references)

12. A Curriculum Vitae

- Limited to a maximum of 2 pages for each investigator and co-investigator
- Must be based on the format of the Community of Science Expertise Profile (see Office of Sponsored Research and Program website or go to www.cos.com)

13. Relevant Appendix

If you have questions or need more information relative to the RIG program, please contact the dean of your school or the Office of the Provost. RIG Proposals should be submitted to the Office of the Provost, Room 206, Virginia Hall.

WET 7/25/03

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