UNLV | RESEARCH

Faculty Opportunity Awards (FOA) Program

Call for Proposals: Collaborative Interdisciplinary Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Awards

The 2024 Call for Proposals is open from December 4, 2023 – February 4, 2024, 11:59pm PT. Create a single PDF file with all application materials and submit it online through the UNLV InfoReady Opportunities Portal.

Program Synopsis

The **Faculty Opportunity Awards Program (FOA)** is intended to help identify core interdisciplinary research teams at UNLV and increase innovative, multiple investigator research and scholarly/creative projects that are funded by extramural agencies, private foundations, or industry. This "seed funding" is designed to bolster the development of strong extramural funding proposals. Teams will involve multiple UNLV colleges/schools and can include external collaborators. FOAs will support team development for long term, sustainable research program development rather than targeting a single project. The FOA's are available thanks to funding provided by the UNLV Research Foundation, UNLV Foundation, and the Division of Research. Applications are submitted online through the UNLV InfoReady Opportunities Portal.

Eligibility

The program is for **interdisciplinary teams** who want to develop projects yielding research, scholarship, and/or creative activities and target specified funding proposals.

The team must consist of a minimum of two collaborators consisting of a Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Principal Investigator(s) (Co-PI), representing different colleges or schools. The PI will be designated as taking the lead for receiving notices and submitting reports. The PI must meet the requirements for Principal Investigator (PI) eligibility (including faculty-in-residence). There may be an unlimited number of collaborators, but full-time faculty are expected as the core of the teams. **Note: Faculty who have received a FOA award previously are eligible to participate on a team but may not serve as the PI or Co-PI.** View historic FOA awardees at Past Awards.

Award Information

Up to $35,000 maximum amount of funding per award is available to identify research teams, develop the proposal idea, identify funding source(s), and apply for grant(s) within the **24-month project performance period**. Project funding is intended for an inclusive range of disciplines at UNLV **and projects representing diverse disciplines (e.g., sciences, humanities, arts, education) and approaches to research/scholarship/creative activities are strongly encouraged.**

Interdisciplinary research, defined broadly, includes the "...integration of data, methods, tools, concepts, theories, and/or perspectives from multiple disciplines or bodies of knowledge in order to answer a question, to solve a problem, or to address a topic or theme that is too broad or complex to be dealt with by one discipline" (Klein, 2021). A more comprehensive term to reflect emerging discourse around inter-, multi-, and trans- disciplinary work might be cross-disciplinary as an umbrella term. Regardless of the term usage, UNLV is working to foster research and scholarship that crosses boundaries, integrates approaches, and concepts, and generates innovation that cannot be reduced to the dominant methods, theories, or research traditions of a single discipline or domain. Interdisciplinary work is collaborative by nature, but not all collaborative scholarship and research is interdisciplinary, even when team members are from different disciplines.

Performance Period

Awards start July 1st and are for 24-months. No extensions will be approved.

Application Details

The intent of the FOA award is to provide resources for team building and to plan for specified federal, philanthropic, and industry funding proposals by the end of the **24month** FOA award.

The primary research deliverable from this award is the submission of **two or more grant proposals for research funding from external sources, including corporate sponsored research, within the 24-month project performance period**. The proposal should help to catalyze a funded research program for new and existing faculty and stimulate development of new research funding opportunities. Ideally, the team would describe a grant making/funding trajectory that is appropriate for the nature of the work and the state of the team. Other planned outcomes, such as manuscripts or creative works, should be included as secondary deliverables if appropriate.

Successful applications will clearly demonstrate that the proposal has high potential for subsequent external funding from specific agencies or sources. Successful applications will:

- Outline the problem, issue, or topic around which the team will develop. The team can be a new team or an existing team that is interested in developing new projects or directions for their work. Teams should note if the proposed teams/work aligns with any of the current interdisciplinary research development areas recently supported through cluster hires (https://www.unlv.edu/research/clusterhires).
- Describe the activities planned for the FOA period and how the planned activities contribute to the development of the team's capacity to address the proposal topic.
  Activities supported by this FOA can be diverse (pilot project, grant writing support, interdisciplinary knowledge building, etc.) but should show clear alignment to the goals of the FOA.
- Provide a rationale/evidence for why this topic area and team is positioned to be successful for extramural funding. This may include recent calls for proposals from funding agencies; market

forecasts; industry trends; or other reports related to social, environmental, or financial challenges or problems.
- Include a plan for intentional inclusion of diverse voices, perspectives, positions, and backgrounds on the team.
- Each application should clearly identify the funding agencies or sources that will be targeted with the research results obtained during the FOA. When possible, the actual funding opportunities should be provided if it is based on a recurring call for proposals.
- A discussion of the budget and how the funds will be utilized to build the collaborative efforts described in the proposal should be included.

Budget
Allowable
- Salaries/wages for UNLV students and/or LOA staff
- Consultant fees
- Materials and supplies
- Participant incentives
- Only travel specifically related to building partnerships and team building capacity/expertise and off-campus field travel.
- Service fees at core facilities or external service fees

Not Allowable
- Honoraria
- Hosting
- Salary for position-numbered technicians and post-docs
- Graduate student stipends and tuition/fees originating in the Graduate College
- Summer salary
- Academic year buyouts for faculty
- All other travel except as noted above. Note-Conference attendance travel to disseminate results is not allowable.
- Equipment purchases greater than $5,000
- Purchase of books and computers (laptop and desktop) •   Indirect costs

College/School Support: Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek support from their deans to help develop the team and support the proposal. Support may include release time for faculty, travel support, or other types of support. If secured, support should be detailed in letters of support from Deans that are submitted as part of the application.

Please note: Funds must be spent within **24 months**. Extensions will not be granted after the period of performance.

Application Packet

Assemble the FOA application packet in a single PDF.

The application packet PDF **must** include the following:

1. Project Summary (1 page maximum)
2. Project Narrative (5 pages maximum)
3. Timeline for Activities and Deliverables for the 24-month period of performance (1 page maximum)
4. Budget Plan (2 pages maximum)
5. List of team members, roles, and biosketch (use format common to federal funding agencies, such as, SciENcv.
6. Curriculum Vitae (2 pages maximum or length specified by potential future funding agency, e.g., four pages maximum for NIH)
7. Current and Pending Support for both Principal Investigators
8. Letter of Support (up to two-pages formal letter of support). If proposing use of facilities or equipment not owned by proposers, letter needs to come from Dean. Support of any form should be also documented in the letters.
9. Three UNLV Potential Reviewers

Please consult the Faculty Opportunity Awards Guidance document for requirements, review criteria, and more information about collecting, creating, and organizing application materials. For guidance on the appearance of a table of contents, please see available templates.

- Simple Template
- Graphic Template

Online Submission Portal

All materials must be compiled into a single PDF file and submitted online through the UNLV InfoReady Opportunities Portal. No late submissions will be considered. The Principal Investigator will receive an automatic notification when the application packet has been received.

Evaluation Process and Criteria

Selection Process

Collaborative Interdisciplinary Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award proposals will be evaluated by confidential peer-review panels comprised of UNLV faculty representing a variety of academic disciplines, faculty ranks, ethnicities, and gender. The panel's confidential comments and recommendations will be reviewed by the   interim Vice President for Research and the interim Associate Vice President for Research with concurrence of the Chairperson of the UNLV Research Foundation and the Chairperson of the UNLV Foundation. Based on all feedback, the Vice President for Research will make the final approval.

Evaluation Criteria Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- The overall quality of the proposal and its relevance to the award program's goals, including the likelihood that the proposed research, scholarly activity, or creative activity will be successful in garnering subsequent external support.
- The clarity of the project's goals and deliverables and the reasonableness of the proposed timeline.
- A cost-effective and well-justified budget that clearly and directly supports the project.

Post-Award Assessment of Progress

The lead PI of the FOA will be required to submit an interim report documenting the status of the FOA at **twelve months.** The format for this report will be provided to each FOA lead PI. Similarly, the lead PI of all successful awards will be required to submit a **final report that will be due 30 days after the project end date.** The content and format will be relayed to the PI in the Notice of Award letter and acceptance agreement.

Additionally, the award account balance will be monitored at the **one-year interval** to ensure expenditures are being made at a pace that indicates sufficient progress towards timely completion.

Deliverables

Within the 24 months of the project performance period, all teams are required to submit at least two proposals to a peer-reviewed, competitive grant program. Documentation of the success or failure of the proposal(s) must be noted in the interim and final reports. The format and delivery of these reports will be provided to the PI in the Notice of Award letter. **A yearly follow-up survey will be sent each year for up to three years.**

Funding Acknowledgment

Program and Application Questions

Contact Althea Sheets, Research, Scholarly, and Creative Activities Development Manager, Office of Sponsored Programs, althea.sheets@unlv.edu or 702-895-1880.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can a full-time Lecturer or a person on a full-time LOB (letter of appointment with benefits) apply for a Faculty Opportunity Award?

A: No. Only faculty who meet the requirements for Principal Investigator (PI) eligibility may apply. No exceptions for PI Eligibility will be granted.

Q: When will awardees be announced and funding available?

A: Announcements of the awardees will occur in April. All funds will start July 1ˢᵗ.

Q: Does my project need to be aligned with one of the existing interdisciplinary research development areas recently supported through cluster hires?

A: No. There is no expectation that proposals will be related to these areas. This FOA is intended to help identify and support an inclusive range of interdisciplinary teams on campus. The question is asked as part of the proposal process only to help develop a more complete picture of the interdisciplinary work and expertise existing on campus.

Q: How do I obtain a public land permit for a UNLV-Sponsored Activity?

A: Instructions are available here: http://publiclands.unlv.edu/permits

Q: How do I gain access to laboratory space in SEB?

A: Instructions are available here: https://www.unlv.edu/seb

Q: Can funding be used to support personnel and students from other universities?

A: The funding cannot be used to employ personnel and students from other universities. However, funds **may** be used to pay for faculty from other universities who serve as consultants with a clear discussion of their role within the budget discussion.

Q: I want to hire a part-time salaried person on this project, but not include health insurance or retirement benefits. What is the appropriate contract to apply?

A: This is a professional contract called "Letter of Appointment" (LOA). Be sure that the FTE does not exceed 47.5 % (19 hrs per week). At 0.50 FTE, this contract type becomes an LOB (with benefits) and thus health insurance and retirement are automatically applied, which if not properly calculated and added to the budget plan, can often exhaust the total amount of the award. Standard fringe benefits need to be budgeted. Consult the Office of Sponsored Programs for current rates.

Q: What is the difference between hiring a Graduate Assistant and a graduate student on hourly wages?

A: A Graduate Assistant (GA) is a salaried employee – paid a stipend set at established amounts for master's and doctoral students – and must be hired either for an entire semester or academic year, with job duties totaling no more than 20 hours per week. A GA is processed through the Graduate College, and the student must be entered into the Grad Rebel Gateway to be awarded the Assistantship. The GA

is subject to additional rules and regulations, such as minimum credit-load requirements, tuition, and fringe benefits. This type of GA support is not allowed on these FOAs. A graduate student on wages is hired as an hourly employee and can be employed for as little as a month with no expectation of paid tuition or fees. When hiring a graduate student on wages, the PI must include fringe benefits in the proposal budget in addition to the hourly rate of pay. **This type of graduate student support (hourly wages) is allowed on these FOAs**. See the question below for information on hourly pay and fringe benefit rates.

Q: If I'm hiring an undergraduate or graduate student on wages, is there a mandated   hourly rate? Must fringe benefits be included?

A: There is no mandated rate of pay for students paid on hourly wages. A typical rate for undergraduates is $9-$15 per hour (based on student level 1); a typical rate for graduate students is $12.25-$25 per hour (based on a student level III). Fringe benefits must be added any time a salary is paid; use the current approved rate of 4.6% for hourly wages.

Q: If a research project requires the use of non-students, will that be acceptable in the proposals?

A: Only personnel on non-numbered positions (wages and LOAs) can be supported on these awards.

Q: Can I use existing personnel such as a lab manager or technician to work part-time on this project?

A: No. Only personnel on non-numbered positions (wages and LOAs) can be supported on these awards.

Q: Is international travel excluded from allowable costs?

A: Only domestic travel will be allowed as specified in the allowable costs portion of the call.

Q: Are databases part of allowable expenses?

A: Yes. If the cost of the database is under $5,000 and should be included under "Materials and Supplies".

Q: Can software be purchased?

A: Yes. It should be included under "Materials and Supplies" and should be essential to the research project.

Q: Can service fees for core facilities or fees for external facilities be included in the budget?

A: Yes. Fees for using core facilities and labs may be included under "Operating Costs" in the budget plan. Please provide justification for use of external facilities.

Q: Is IRB approval of my project required on the cover page form <u>before</u> I submit a proposal?

A: No. IRB requirements must be noted on the cover page form, but the faculty member does not need to secure IRB approvals (if required for the project) unless they are selected to receive a Faculty Opportunity Award. However, the IRB approval letter must be submitted to the Office of Sponsored Programs before an award account will be established.