

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
STUDENT RESEARCH FUND GUIDELINES  
School of Education  
2011-2012

**Description:**

The Faculty/Student Research Fund is created to stimulate student research in the School of Education. Consideration is to be given to students for dissertation or thesis related research proposals and to faculty and student collaborations. Any registered student in the School of Education is eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$1,500 during a period not to exceed 12 months to support dissertation or thesis related research. Collaborative faculty and student projects may not exceed \$3,000. These grants are highly competitive, recognize superior scholarship, and are based on merit. The money for this program comes from the generous support of the School's alumni and friends. Approved copies of past successful grant proposals are available in the Dean's office.

**Review Committee:**

The committee consists of six to eight faculty members elected at large, and four graduate students. In the case of widely disparate reviews, the Faculty/Student Research Committee may submit the proposal to SOE Faculty who are experts in the field.

**Proposals:**

Proposals are evaluated not solely on whether the basic idea of the study seems to be a good one, but on the strength of the case that is made for the study in the proposal itself. Students should be aware that though they may have already made an effective case for the study in a much longer dissertation overview, the case must be made equally effectively in the 2-4 pages of the proposal, and that the reviewers may or may not have specific expertise in the students' areas of interest. The proposal should therefore be written so that its objectives, theoretical framework, and methodology are made intelligible to a well-informed non-specialist. Students are expected to involve their advisor in proposal development and completion.

Collaborative faculty and student projects are those that are clearly team efforts, with the roles of each collaborator explicitly described, but students are considered the PI and manage the budget. In the proposal, faculty and student roles and contributors to the research are to be delineated. Include prior collaborative experience together and role of each in the findings dissemination process.

The proposal should be well written and organized into the following topic areas, preferably in this order: 1) statement of the problem, 2) theoretical/conceptual framework, 3) methods, design and procedure, 4) data analysis, and 5) contribution to education or to knowledge of disciplines that inform School of Education Programs. The objectives of the study should be concise and clearly stated. A theoretical/conceptual review of relevant research to support the study should be included. Methods and/or techniques should be described in detail and be appropriate for addressing the problem. The proposal should include a summary of the anticipated conclusions and implications in light of the proposed findings and previous research. Lastly, the contribution to knowledge and educational importance of the study should be identified. The statement of contributions should address how this study would contribute to building a broader research agenda, which may include prospects for future external funding, subsequent studies, and dissemination through presentations and/or publications. The merits of the proposal will be judged on all five of these areas as well as the overall significance of the study and the degree to which the expenditures in the itemized budget sheet are justified.

An adequate budget justification includes both a rationale for including each item in the budget as well as a justification of the cost of each item. Requests for funding personnel should specify the hourly rate of payment. See example below.

Evaluation check sheets for the proposals contain the following categories: 1) Objectives clearly stated; 2) Adequate theoretical/conceptual base; 3) Appropriateness of the methods, techniques, or approach; 4) Reasonableness of the anticipated conclusions in light of the findings and previous work; 5) Educational importance of the study / Expected Contribution; 6) Appropriateness of budget.

The review process will begin on **Monday, November 7, 2011 and Monday, March 5, 2012** for all proposals. Proposals are to be submitted on or before **4 pm** on these dates to Susan Sherlock, Dean's Office, 5605 WWPH. Questions regarding budgets should be referred to Dr. Jere Gallagher, 5610 WWPH, (412) 648-1774.

Although approval of the research by the IRB/Human Subjects Committee is not required prior to submission to the Faculty/Student Research Fund, **the project cannot be carried out until IRB approval has been received for research that involves human subjects**. This requires that all PI's and co-PI's have completed the Research Integrity and Human Subjects Certification (see Office of Research on the University of Pittsburgh website [www.pitt.edu](http://www.pitt.edu)).

NOTE: All proposals undergo "blind" review by members of the committee. Accordingly, three of the four copies of the proposal to be submitted must not contain any information indicating the identity of either the student or the faculty advisor, anywhere in the document.

**Materials to be included:**

1. Four copies of a 2-4 page (8 ½ x 11 paper), single-space summary of the project. The type-face must be comfortably readable: no smaller than 12-point font. Proposals in smaller type or hard to read due to poor duplication will be returned and not be considered that term for funding.

If the proposal exceeds the page limit, it will be rejected without review. The summary should be organized to facilitate evaluation (e.g. include subheads). The evaluation form is available upon request.

For one copy, the proposal should follow the format: upper left corner – title of paper, author, research advisor, department, **e-mail address** and phone number.

For the three remaining copies, only the title should appear. No identifying names (author's or advisor's) can appear on these three copies, not at the top, in the text or in the references.

2. Four copies of a Budget Sheet itemizing and justifying expenses (one attached to each copy of the proposal).

See attached example. Expenses are limited to data collection and analysis. A list of allowable expenses is appended to these guidelines. Payments to individuals for services are to be debited directly to an award account (managed by the student grantee). Awardee is not to pay with personal funds. If equipment purchases are deemed necessary, they will become the property of the School at the completion of the project. Funds requested for equipment, in particular, should be justified in detail. The equipment must not be available elsewhere, it must be central to the project's research, and a time frame for long-term use must be indicated (i.e., if the equipment can be used in more than one research project, it should be noted).

If the project will cost more than \$1,500, or \$3,000 for collaborative studies, the project's real costs should be itemized with a request of the maximum amount allowable. Identify which elements you are requesting from the Faculty/Student Research Committee. (See Budget Example 2) (If other funding is available to the

project, or to a related one, the amount of overall funding to this project (already received) must be specified, as well as the relation of this project to the larger funded project.

3. Send an electronic copy of your proposal and budget only as one complete file to Susan Sherlock, [sks@pitt.edu](mailto:sks@pitt.edu) by the deadline date.
4. For student proposals, two copies of a cover letter on departmental letterhead listing all overview or doctoral committee members, signed by the research advisor. The letter should indicate the status of the student's project, thesis or dissertation, and should identify whether the overview has been successfully defended.

Joint student and faculty projects should include two copies of a cover letter describing the nature of the collaboration. The statement should describe how this project meets the goals of being a joint study, rather than the student(s) primarily carrying out the directions of the faculty member(s).

5. If this proposal is related to another student or faculty proposal, then the relationship between the two should be specified in a cover letter to the committee chair. Proposal will be reviewed individually.
6. **One business size self-addressed, stamped envelope addressed to the student research at his/her local mailing address.**
7. One 3 x 5 index card typed in the following format:  
Researcher, last name, first name  
Title of Project  
Local mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address  
Date of submission  
Total amount of funds requested  
Student's and Faculty's department

### **Criteria for Evaluation:**

Rating will be based on specified criteria coincident with the topic areas (1-6) mentioned above. A copy of the rating sheet is upon request. Availability of other funding and relationships to other proposals will not be used to rate proposals or make funding decisions.

Reviewers will be asked to make a decision to accept or to reject the proposal. They will also be asked to recommend a budget funding level. Review sheets will be forwarded to the Dean's Office along with the committee's rating and recommendations.

The review committee will evaluate the projects and make a recommendation to the Dean's Office within one month. The Dean's office will notify all applicants of the final decisions within ten working days. The grant period will officially begin upon notification, unless otherwise specified and agreed to by both the faculty member and the Dean's Office. Once an award has been made, the faculty member will sign a letter of agreement with the Dean's Office specifying fiduciary and legal obligations.

Students may contact the Faculty/Student research Committee chairperson for comments.

**Final Report and Requirements:**

Final report: One copy of the final report (the abstract from any resulting thesis, dissertation, or publication will be accepted as one form of the final report) is to be submitted to Susan Sherlock, Dean's Office, 5605 WWPH, at the end of the grant period. The final report should address any publications, conference proposals, or funding proposals in progress. Students (and Faculty if applicable) will be asked periodically to report any products of the research (publications, conference presentations, job talks and/or funding proposals). Students and faculty are requested to share their findings with their colleagues in the School of Education at the annual research forum hosted by the Council of Graduate Students in Education (CGSE), 5100 WWPH, 648-7055. Grant recipients should submit a proposal to present at the CGSE annual conference.

## BUDGET EXAMPLES

### **Budget Example 1:**

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 42 participant couples @ \$1,050.00        |                   |
| \$25/couple                                |                   |
| 21 videotapes @ \$3/tape                   | 63.00             |
| Translation services @ \$10/hr. x 11 hours | 110.00            |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>\$1,223.00</b> |

As noted in the proposal, payment for participants should help to increase the participation rates among this small population of immigrant parents with a learning disabled child. The amount requested (\$25 per couple) seems appropriate for a 1 ½- hour interview that will be videotaped and requires both parents to be present.

Funding for videotapes is requested to record the 42 participant couple interviews for study ratings, as specified in the proposal. Since approximately one quarter of these interviews will be conducted in Chinese, funds for a translator are included. The translator will be a graduate student enrolled at the University in this field whose native language is Chinese. The hourly rate approximates that of a graduate student researcher.

### **Budget Example 2:**

This proposal is related to a funded project in Bosnia. That grant will pay for travel to Bosnia, but will not pay for data collection and analysis which is being requested from the Faculty/Student Research Committee.

| Budget   | <u>Paid by X grant</u> | <u>Requested from SOE</u> |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 tape recorders @ \$39.95/each  | \$79.90                |                           |
| 20 audiotapes @ \$.99/each   |                        | \$19.80                   |
| Transcription of tapes (100 hrs. @ \$5/hour)   |                        | 500.00                    |
| Graduate Student Assistants (150 hrs. @ \$7.50/hr.)<br>(Review of literature/analysis of interviews) |                        | 1,125.00                  |
| Travel to Bosnia (price verified by University<br>Travel)  | 1,650.00               |                           |
| Room and Board (15 days @\$60/day)   | 900.00                 |                           |

|  |            |            |
|--|------------|------------|
| Travel to sites in Bosnia (taxi/bus/train)<br>(Daily travel to sites for interviews) |            | 350.00     |
| Telephone (to Bosnia and during data collection)                                     |            | 50.00      |
| Copying of transcriptions (200 pages) plus<br>Instruments (750 pages @\$.05/ea.)     |            | 37.50      |
| Costs paid by X grant:   | \$2,629.90 |            |
| Total funds requested from SOE:  |            | \$1,500.00 |
| Total cost of project:   | \$4,712.20 |            |

**BUDGET GUIDELINES  
FACULTY/STUDENT RESEARCH FUND**

**List of allowable expenses:**

The purpose of the fund is to support research directly related to data collection and analysis. All budgets are negotiated through the Research Fund Committee. The following are simply examples and are not intended to be inclusive.

Expenditures should be directly related to research and funds should not otherwise be available.

If the project requires approval by the Human Subjects committee or the Internal Review Board (IRB), the project cannot be initiated until approval has been received.

**Materials should be directly related to data collection:**

1. Survey forms: printing expenses, mailing costs
2. Purchase of tests forms
3. Testing equipment: purchase and rentals
4. Field related equipment: purchase and rentals
5. Duplication of documents
6. Tapes, disks and other materials for recording or analyzing data
7. Stimulus preparation
8. Response measurement

**Lowest costs transportation solely for the purposes of data collection:**

1. Libraries and government documents essential for research
2. Face-to-face interviews
3. On-site observations

**Research support personnel:**

1. Graduate (or undergraduate) student assistance (the Dean's Office has information on costing personnel, including fringe benefit rates)
2. Transcription of audio or videotapes used to collect interviews or observational data (funding up to 50% of total transcription hours)
3. Payment to subjects
4. Other consultation (i.e., expert scoring of protocols)
5. Related phone calls

If statistical consultation is needed for the project, the researcher should take advantage of free services available on campus and/or justify why additional assistance is needed.

Capital equipment including software: If purchased, it becomes the property of the School of Education at the end of the project period. Submit equipment to Susan Sherlock, 5605 WWPH.

**Expenses not allowed:**

1. Typing, editing, and duplicating of reports
2. Multi-purpose travel, for example, a conference and a library visit. (For information on conference-related travel funds, contact the Dean's Office.) Single purpose travel means that 80% of work time is spent on research project
3. *Per diem payments* to the researcher, including food and lodging. Food and lodging expenses incurred during data collection can be reimbursed with submission of itemized receipts.
4. Costs associated with publishing or presenting results of research

Questions should be submitted to the Faculty/Student Research Committee and reviewed by the Dean's Office.

Once a grant has been awarded, the budget must be spent within the time allowed. All requests for a budget modification are to be submitted by letter with a detailed justification and approved by the committee prior to any expenditure. Proposal extensions need to be requested in writing to the Dean's Office. A researcher may not apply for a new grant until the work of the first project has been completed and a final report has been submitted. Exceptions are granted only with approval both from the Faculty/Student Research Committee and Dean's Office.

NOTE: If the approved grant includes travel funds, airline tickets can only be purchased through certified University travel agencies. This includes domestic and international transportation. For further clarification of the university Travel and business Policy and/or Procedure please refer to Document Number 05-07-01 in the University's Policy/Procedure Manual kept in the Dean's Office, 5605 WWPH, or see Susan Sherlock, 5605 WWPH to obtain the list of approved travel agencies.