**Undergraduate Academic Project Grants (APGs) Application**

**Information and Guidelines**

**2023-2024 Grant Cycle**

**Purpose**

Academic Project Grants support full-time undergraduate research and creative work at Western Carolina University. Grants provide support in many ways, including travel (post-project support), equipment, or supplies (project support). Please be aware that equipment purchased through a grant reverts to the student department once the project is complete. Individual student award limit is $500. Group travel award limit is $2000.

**Eligibility**

Any full-time undergraduate student or faculty member working with and on behalf of a group of students is eligible to apply for a grant that might provide support in many ways, including equipment, supplies, or travel (hourly wage compensation is excluded).

**Who Applies**

Project grants must be authored by the full-time WCU enrolled undergraduate student while they are enrolled at WCU. However, a faculty sponsor writes and applies on behalf of a student group of two or more (see Group Travel Proposals). Faculty should not apply on behalf of one student. The student should apply themselves.

**Submission Guidelines and Deadlines**

There are four proposal deadlines between September 2023 and February 2024, as follows:

* September 28, 2023
* October 26, 2023
* January 25, 2024
* February 22, 2024

To be considered at the deadline, the final proposal must be received by 5 pm on the deadline date, using the Qualtrics portal. Proposals that come in after 5 pm will be held to the next deadline. Submissions that do not follow guidelines will be returned and can be re-submitted at the next cycle deadline date.

Funds are **awarded and reimbursed** on an on-going basis, and therefore it is to your advantage to meet the soonest possible deadline with your proposal. Cash advances will not be provided for awarded projects.

Students should submit the proposal to the Qualtrics portal and complete the appropriate submission fields. All final proposals\* submitted for committee review will need to be **uploaded in PDF format** and **include the combined required documents in this order:**

* Completed ***Academic Project Grants Proposal Template***
* ***Faculty Letter of Support***, applicable in all student-submitted proposals
* Any related IRB approvals or exemptions, if applicable
* Application or acceptance confirmation to conference or professional program, if applicable

\*The final proposal should be saved in PDF format with the file name as follows: LAST NAME\_FIRST NAME\_APG PROPOSAL\_CYCLE DEADLINE DATE

**Any proposal submitted to the Qualtrics portal that has not followed the instructions will not be reviewed**. The student or faculty member will be notified to correct the issues and re-submit at the next cycle deadline.

**Group Travel Proposals – for faculty use**

Faculty are welcome to write and submit a proposal on behalf of a student group (2 or more students) for either project support or post-project support funding. **Group Travel proposals should be faculty written**. The request should include the names of all student participants. The single budget presented should be for the group. Based on the number of student participants and available funding, the Academic Project Grants Committee will decide on the total amount to be awarded to the group.

If a faculty member is writing on behalf of student groups to attend a conference or event, they must include copies of all letters or emails of application or acceptance from the conference or program as confirmation for the students.

* For a group of **students making multiple presentations** at one conference or attending professional training opportunities, please submit **one** proposal template for the entire group. The proposal completed by the faculty member should focus on the value of the group experience.

Faculty should not consider submitting a proposal for funding to be the same as guaranteed funds for your group. Faculty should work with their department heads to consider other funding options if the group request exceeds $2,000. Please also consider reviewing other funding options via [*Faculty Research Resources*](https://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/research/faculty-resources/index.aspx).

Faculty who will be reimbursed for expenses as part of their APG award (e.g., the cost of registration fees, etc.), should follow university reimbursement guidelines. A travel pre-approval - **created through Chrome River** - must be completed before any travel and should be approved by the budget authority and traveler’s supervisor before attending any event. For questions about this process please contact Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, at [scmelton@email.wcu.edu](mailto:scmelton@email.wcu.edu).

**Proposal Submission**

Authors should use the Academic Project Grant Proposal Template and be sure to include the applicable documents (listed under the “Submission Guidelines and Deadlines” area of this document) in your PDF. Each prompt must be addressed. Please be mindful that there are character limits for some sections.

**The final proposal should be submitted to the Qualtrics portal.**

**Faculty Letter of Support (student submissions)**

Faculty do not need to provide a letter of recommendation if they are submitting a proposal on behalf of student groups.

**The faculty sponsor should review and include a letter with the following.**

1. The sponsor’s candid evaluation of the student and likelihood that the project will be completed if funded **OR** the candid evaluation of the student and the relevance of the need for travel (if applying for post-project support).
2. An acknowledgement of the student’s dissemination plan. The faculty sponsor will see that the student(s) follows up with this commitment, if awarded. We encourage students to present their work through:
   1. The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) to be held April 8-10, 2024.
   2. Discipline specific conferences.
   3. We require that a funded APG awardee register and present at WCU’s Research and Scholarship Celebration (RASC); part of the Undergrad Expo, to be held March 20-21, 2024.
3. Full disclosure of other funding sources being used to fund the project.
4. Faculty members must provide assurance that projects are in compliance with university and government policies concerning human and animal subjects in research. This can be done by stating in earnest that the project has been approved and attaching a copy of the University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval or exemption letter, as applicable. If IRB or IACUC approval is not required, then state so and provide a rationale.
5. If the research is conducted in a laboratory, the faculty should state that the research is being conducted in accordance with standard operating procedures that have been approved by John Maddy, Director of Safety/Risk Management at 828-227-7443 or [jmaddy@email.wcu.edu](mailto:jmaddy@email.wcu.edu).
6. Faculty should include all related IRB approval materials along with the student’s proposal, if applicable. Letters of support can include a statement of exemption if no IRB is needed. The IRB related materials should be in PDF format and be uploaded in the Qualtrics submission in combination with the other PDF materials for the proposal.
7. Grants for travel to conferences or training programs (for the purpose of making a presentation or developing professional skills) should include an e-mail or letter of application or acceptance from the conference as confirmation the student(s) requesting travel have legitimate need to attend. If in email format, please scan the email into a single PDF document, compiled with the template, along with the letter of support, and then uploaded into the Qualtrics portal. **All students listed on the proposal requesting post-project support should be included in those confirmations.**
8. Before agreeing to sponsor a proposal, faculty members should review the student’s proposal for both content and style (spelling, grammar, citations, etc.), paying particular attention to the bibliography and budget.

**Grant Restrictions**

Research projects must adhere to federal, state, and local regulations and university processes concerning human and animal subjects in research. Projects that involve human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to beginning recruitment or data collection. Projects involving animal subjects must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC prior to beginning any work. For questions regarding these policies or for help determining whether your project requires review, contact Mallory Ball, Research Protection Officer at 828-227-7212 or [mball@email.wcu.edu](mailto:mball@email.wcu.edu), or visit the [Office of Research Administration](https://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/research/sponsored-research/).

**Undergraduate research grants will not be awarded without Institutional Review Board (human studies) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee approval, as appropriate and necessary.**

Research projects must adhere to all federal (e.g., EPA, OSHA), state and local environmental, occupational and safety regulations to ensure the safety of students, staff, faculty and facilities. For questions regarding these policies, contact Jon Maddy, Director of Safety/Risk Management at 828-227-7443 or [jmaddy@email.wcu.edu](mailto:jmaddy@email.wcu.edu).

Post-project support funding requests to attend the *National Conference on Undergraduate Research* (NCUR) are excluded from consideration. Students who wish to apply for funding to attend NCUR are asked to apply for travel support by following the guidance located on the [NCUR website](https://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/research/undergraduate-research/ncur.aspx).

**Proposal Review**

Proposals are considered by the Undergraduate Academic Project Grants Committee. The Research Programs Coordinator will request recommendations from college deans to invite faculty members to serve on a two-year cycle. The committee has one member from each college, Hunter Library, and the Office of Research Administration.

**Award Information**

This grant works on a reimbursement system. We expect students and faculty to request reimbursements in a timely manner.

**Project Support (Equipment, supplies/purchase procedures)**

Cash advances are not allowed for projects. **Purchases for equipment and supplies cannot be made personally through online shopping or direct purchases.**

If awarded funds through the APG program, it is the faculty sponsor/awardee responsibility to notify and work with the department’s administrative support personnel on the purchasing of equipment/materials/supplies/etc. Purchase requisitions should be made and funded by the department. Once the expense has cleared banner, the Research Programs Coordinator will reimburse the department using the APG fund.

At the end of the project any equipment and unused supplies revert to the department.

**Post-Project Support**

***Travel – Faculty Procedures***

**Faculty** reimbursements must be submitted through the Chrome River system.Pre-Approval is required and should be completed and approved prior to event attendance.The Research Programs Coordinator will supply the appropriate fund number for use.

***Travel – Student Procedures***

**Student** reimbursements must be submitted through the Chrome River system. For a student who was awarded travel funding, the student is responsible for managing their receipts and working with their departmental admin for reimbursement. The Research Programs Coordinator will supply the appropriate fund number for use.

**\*\*Note for all travelers:**

Reimbursements should be made within one month of the completion of the project, expenditure of the funds, or conference date. No reimbursements will be made following the **last day of classes for the spring semester.**

For example, if your grant supports travel from November 3-5, then your reimbursement request is due no later than December 5.

Failure to meet the reimbursement request deadline may result in no reimbursement. The absolute deadline for projects that extend through the entire academic year is the **last day of classes in the spring semester. No reimbursements will be made after the end of the spring semester.**

**Questions**

This program is administered by The Office of Research Administration; please direct questions to Suzanne Melton, Research Programs Coordinator, at [scmelton@email.wcu.edu](mailto:scmelton@email.wcu.edu).