

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
JAMES H. ZUMBERGE FACULTY RESEARCH & INNOVATION FUND
ZUMBERGE INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH AWARD



APPLICATION DEADLINE: 5 pm, Monday, February 1, 2021

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Zumberge Individual Research Award program is to help new and junior faculty launch their USC scholarly and research careers by providing grants that serve as a steppingstones to external funding.

The Zumberge Individual Research Award provides up to \$30,000 in seed funds. Applicants may add a formal mentoring component to their project by including a senior faculty member. Those senior faculty who serve as research mentors in support of proposed Zumberge Individual Research Award projects receive \$2,000 in funding for their own research.

TOPICS ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

The Zumberge Individual program accepts proposals on all topics of research and scholarship, including humanities, social and political sciences, law, STEM, education, business, among many others.

ELIGIBILITY

Proposing PIs must be full-time tenure-track or non-tenure track Assistant Professors. Visiting and adjunct faculty are not eligible to apply.

Current Research Support Limits: Faculty who have received significant internal or external support, in the form of faculty research start-up packages, ongoing laboratory support, research awards, grants or contracts, do not qualify for this program. Specifically, faculty who hold start-up, research, or gift accounts with a *combined total in excess of \$150,000 in unexpended funds for research at the time of application* are not eligible to apply for funding. An exception is made for non-tenure track (research) faculty whose secured externally funded grants are covering their salary.

EXCLUSIONS WITH RELATED PROGRAMS

- The program will not fund the same work that is being funded under other Provost programs or by external sponsors.
- Topics eligible for funding from the [Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute](#) or the [Ming Hsieh Institute](#) are not eligible for Zumberge Individual Awards. Applications proposing such topics will be rejected without review.
- Previous recipients of a Rose Hills Award or a Zumberge Individual Research Award are not eligible to apply. A list of previous awardees can be found here: [Rose Hills](#), [Zumberge Individual](#)
- Applicants may not apply to the [Zumberge Diversity & Inclusion](#) award program during the same award cycle.

FACULTY MENTOR CRITERIA AND ACTIVITIES

Applicants are encouraged to include a well-considered and substantive faculty research mentoring component in their proposal. Any full-time USC faculty member at the rank of Associate Professor or higher may serve as a mentor and support the applicant's research through activities including:

- Identifying prior and current scholarship and research related to the project.
- Assisting in preparing the research design and executing the research activities.
- Arranging forums for the presentation, dissemination, and/or critique of the applicant's research.
- Identifying potential publication sources and assisting in the preparation and submission of articles and manuscripts.
- Connecting the PI to other relevant investigators at USC and at other institutions.
- Identifying external funding sources and assisting in the preparation of grant proposals.

ELIGIBLE BUDGET ITEMS

- Research materials, small equipment, and supplies necessary to carry out the proposed research, including computers, software, digital records and data, lab materials, cameras, recording devices, etc.
- Research expenses related to data acquisition, such as the use of core or shared resource facilities.
- Salary support for postdocs, graduate student RAs, undergraduate researchers, and other student wages.
- Travel funds (US and international) related to conferences and research collaborations that lead to publications or other scholarly products. Guidance for COVID-19 related limitations on travel can be found [here](#). If, due to the pandemic, travel is not allowed at the time of proposal submission, it may not be included in the budget.
- Collection and purchase of archival materials and subscriptions to databases.
- Costs for publication, including manuscript permission fees, where grants will not cover page charges.
- PI summer salary (up to \$5,000) plus fringe benefits.

GRANT CONDITIONS

- The Zumberge Individual Research Award is not intended to supplement currently funded efforts or to provide interim bridge funding.
- Awardees have discretion in the budgeting and re-budgeting of funds to meet their research needs within the guidelines of the fund and the terms of the proposal. However, funds may not be transferred to another project or to other researchers or institutions.
- Permanent equipment required for the conduct of research becomes the property of the University.
- Awards include fringe benefits but are not assessed Facilities & Administration Costs (formerly known as Indirect Costs).
- Recipients have 12 months from the date funds are received to complete projects. Funds not expended by that time will be returned to support other Zumberge grants.
- Recipients must be USC faculty during the award period.
- Awards do not fund student tuition and other student fees (such as health insurance).
- Awards do not pay for consultants.
- All USC rules, with respect to conflict of interest, human subject research, animal research, etc., apply to projects funded under this program. Funding will only be provided following confirmation that all pertinent reviews have been submitted for approval by relevant committees (e.g.: IRB, IACUC).

RESEARCH PROPOSAL EVALUATIONS

Research proposals will be evaluated by interdisciplinary faculty panels and by the Office of Research. Typically, reviewers are USC faculty members; however, when the necessary expertise does not reside on campus, external reviewers may be involved.

Review criteria include:

- a) The significance of the proposed research or scholarship.
- b) The originality of the proposed research or scholarship.
- c) Evidence that the project can be completed within the proposed timeline.
- d) The impact of funding on investigator's ability to initiate scholarly research.
- e) The likelihood that the project will lead to a sustained program of scholarly research.
- f) The likelihood that the project will lead to external funding (as applicable).
- g) Appropriateness of budget.
- h) The proposed milestones are identified and achievable.

NOTIFICATION AND TERM OF AWARD

Awardees will be notified of the grant amount and conditions of the award by June, 2021. Copies of the notification of the award will be sent to their school research deans. Funds will be available by August, 2021, and will expire as of September 30, 2022. Grants are not renewable. Funds not expended at the end of the grant year will be returned to the Office of the Provost. No-cost extensions may be granted under exceptional circumstances but must be requested in writing with a justification.

REPORTING AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORT

Awardees are asked to submit a brief grant report by October 31, 2022 (including an accounting of expenditures and external support received). A formal request for the report will be sent to awardees at the close of the grant period, indicating required information. These reports will be reviewed and portions of the report may be reprinted to build support for the fund among the university community and to make decisions about how best to use the fund to promote productivity in the future.

Any publication or creative endeavor arising from work supported by the fund must acknowledge the *James H. Zumberge Faculty Research and Innovation Fund at the University of Southern California*. The Office of Research should be informed of any grant submissions/awards and/or any publications for which Zumberge funds were used.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions about the Zumberge Individual Research Award or the application submission process can be directed to Melody Pham at vprsch@usc.edu.

For submission instructions, see the Proposal Guidelines.

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GUIDELINES

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES:

Before preparing a proposal, applicants should read closely the program description, including the sections on eligibility and evaluation criteria.

Proposals must be submitted using the Office of Research online application system ([here](#)).

Format: Proposal documents should be written using a standard font, 12 point, single-spaced, with one-inch margins.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

Cover page information (*to be filled out on-line*)

- a) Principal Investigator contact information & 10-digit USC ID number.
- b) Proposal title.
- c) Budget, total requested.
- d) Is USC Committee approval required? (Indicate all that apply: IACUC, IRB, etc.).
- e) Have you previously been awarded a Zumberge Individual or Rose Hills award?
- f) Mentor contact information & 10-digit USC ID number (as applicable).

Sections to be uploaded: Please follow instructions carefully and do not submit additional materials not requested by this RFP. Information that is uploaded beyond what is requested will not be included in the proposal package provided to reviewers.

- a) **Abstract:** (*not to exceed 30 lines of text*) A stand-alone succinct description of the proposed work.
- b) **Project Narrative:** (*a single PDF file not to exceed 5 pages*) Page limits are inclusive of figures and tables; headers (below) should be included in the narrative:
 - i. **Research Question or Project Objective**
Specify project research question(s), hypotheses, or aims, design and placement in the literature of the field. Describe the role of the faculty mentor, if applicable. Address a broad audience of reviewers who may not be from the same discipline. Clearly explain why the questions, hypotheses, or aims of your project are significant and original, as well as the ways in which your project will provide novel and important insights.

ii. *Project Design / Research Methods*

Describe the scholarly and research activities to be carried out. State your research design, if applicable, and explain how it will allow you to address the questions and hypotheses of interest. Explain what obstacles you might encounter and how you might overcome these.

iii. *Expected Results and Impact on Long-Term Research Program*

Describe the expected outcomes and deliverables. Explain how the project and its findings are part of or will help generate scholarship beyond the period of the award.

iv. *Opportunities for Attracting External Funding*

Describe how scholarship supported by the grant will help to secure subsequent external funding, including references to specific funding agencies, foundations, and programs. Describe research steps and outcomes needed to be competitive for those opportunities.

v. *Timeline*

Provide a clear timeline with specific project milestones. Work is not required to be completed within one year, although financial support is limited to one year. If work extends beyond one year, there must be a clear product at end of the first year.

- c) **Budget Justification: (not to exceed one page)** Clarify the role of individuals for whom salary, M&S, and other support is requested relative to the objectives of the project. No specific format is required. Explain how travel funds will be used to conduct the research (guidance for COVID-19 related limitations on travel can be found [here](#)). If, due to the pandemic, travel is not allowed at the time of proposal submission, it may not be included in the budget of the project.
- d) **Current Funding: (up to two pages)** List all other sources of internal and external support awarded during the past three years, current or pending, including start-up funding, both as PI or co-PI. For each, give the title, period, award amount (if co-PI or collaborator on a grant, indicate amount received), sponsor, and describe the relationship of each to the current proposal. Statements of sources of support will be verified by the Office of Research. If existing funding appears similar to the proposed project, explain the differences.
- e) **Letter(s) of Support:** A Letter of Support is required from your department chair or school. The letter should indicate support for use of school resources and facilities (as applicable).
- f) **Mentor Statement: (not to exceed one page)** Faculty mentors must prepare a statement outlining the role they will play and the activities they will undertake. The statement should briefly describe the relationship of the applicant's project to the mentor's own research. It should then describe specific and concrete actions the mentor will carry out. Where relevant, the statement should provide an underlying rationale for the mentoring activities (e.g., the mentor's ongoing participation in an interdisciplinary or inter-university scholarly network, or the mentor's previous experience with potential funding sources).
- g) **References: (not to exceed one page)**
- h) **Curriculum vitae: (not to exceed 5 pages)** Applicants may use any standardized CV format, or institutional ones (such as the NIH Biosketch, NEH, etc.).

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Submit your application proposal utilizing the Office of Research application submission and reporting portal.

Go to <https://research.usc.edu/usc-grants/> to log in (or create an account for yourself), using your USC email address.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 5 pm, Monday, February 1, 2021

Proposals submitted after to the above-mentioned deadline will be rejected without review.

Signatures: By submitting the online application, applicants (and mentors, as applicable) indicate their agreement to comply with the terms and conditions of the Zumberge program as well as all other applicable USC policies.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND PROGRAM CONTACT

For additional information or inquiries about the Zumberge Individual Research Award program or the application submission process, please contact Melody Pham at vprsch@usc.edu.