

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Research and Grant Guidelines

Important Note: These guidelines supersede all previous versions and are effective starting with proposals submitted after **July 1, 2020**. The Dean of the College of Science & Engineering (CSE Dean) and Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI) reserve the right to amend these guidelines as circumstances warrant. These guidelines apply to all funded research grants and contracts awarded to faculty in CSE and are in place of other ORGS policies (e.g., Research Incentive Awards) that apply in other colleges.

CSE Proposal Submission Guidelines

The College and ORGS are required to ensure proposals are consistent with University and College policy and that commitments made to granting agencies are understood and supported by CMU. The review of grant proposals also helps the Dean and VPRI understand faculty research agendas, so they can be effective advocates for faculty research and identify opportunities for external partnerships and support. These guidelines are intended to allow adequate time for these functions without hindering proposal development and submission.

The following guidelines apply to ALL proposals regardless of project size, budget or funding agency.

All college and ORGS commitments for matching funds and reassigned time must be approved by the Dean and the VPRI in advance of submitting the proposal.

Timeline:

- At least **3 weeks** (15 business days) prior to submission send an e-mail to notify the Dean, Associate Dean, and Chair that you intend to submit a proposal. Indicate the funding agency, approximate budget and any requirements for match, reassigned time, or reduced F&A imposed by the funder. The Dean will notify ORGS of approval to proceed; **ORGS will not begin work on a proposal without this approval.**

Proposals with less than 3 weeks notification are not eligible for investments such as matching funds or reassigned time and **will be given lower priority for processing.** Exceptions may be considered by the VPRI and Dean when you can provide evidence that the normal notification time was not possible, and such proposals may be given priority handling **ONLY** where this does not delay other submissions.

- **After receiving approval to proceed**, contact the [ORGS research officer](#) (contact person) assigned to your department; your contact will create the Cayuse shell and forward the transmittal, financial disclosure, and current-pending support forms for you (and other senior personnel) to complete or update.
- At least **2 weeks** (10 business days) prior to submission provide a detailed draft budget to your ORGS contact. Please contact ORGS if you need assistance or a NEW budget template. Then work with your ORGS contact to develop the following required documents:
 - Cayuse transmittal form, including Financial Disclosure Statements and Current and Pending Support forms for all senior or key personnel.
 - Complete budget, including justification and source of funds for any required match.

Your ORGS contact will ask you to initiate the Cayuse approval process after these documents are approved and uploaded to your Cayuse shell.

- At least **5 business days** before submission deadline ensure the **complete proposal including final budget and draft narrative** is in Cayuse. Initiate Cayuse routing.
- At least **3 business days** before submission deadline: provide **final proposal narrative** to the Dean and ORGS; the proposal must be in the final form for submission at this point.

The Dean, or in the Dean's absence an Associate Dean, will only approve proposals that follow the above procedure and allow adequate time for review. **If this timeline is not followed you will be ineligible for university investments such as matching funds or reassigned time. If the final narrative is not provided on time your proposal may not be submitted to the funding agency.**

Bridge Funding

Faculty who are “between” grants and who have submitted one or more new proposals may request bridge funding from the Dean and ORGS pending the decision from the funding agency. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis taking into account factors such as the applicant’s track record of external funding.

CSE Research Incentive Funds

Faculty may utilize 75% of the **net** savings from academic-year salary and benefits covered by a grant or contract. Net savings is the amount remaining after replacement costs and any matching funds are deducted. Examples:

Time reassigned from teaching

- Effort that would otherwise be spent teaching is reassigned to research and charged to a grant or contract at full cost. For example, 3 hours of teaching effort is paid by a grant at 12.5% (.125 FTE) of a faculty member’s 10-month salary + benefit cost (call that X). Thus $0.125 X$ is the amount available in the grant.
- Replacement cost (for someone else to teach that 3-hour course) is deducted from the amount available. Replacement cost is set by the university (10,006 for a 3-hour course in 2020-21) and cannot be negotiated. If there is no grant match, the incentive funds will be 75% of the amount remaining: $(0.125 X - \$10,006) \times 0.75$

Charging university-paid research effort

- Effort devoted to research that would otherwise be paid by the university is instead charged to a grant or contract at full cost. 75% of the salary + benefit cost paid by the grant will be available as incentive. (Summer salary paid by a grant or contract is **not** eligible for any incentive funding under these guidelines because no salary savings accrue to the University.)

Guidelines for spending research incentive funds

- Funds will be controlled by the college and may be reallocated if the account is inactive for a year or more.
- Funds may be used for travel, supplies and equipment in accordance with university guidelines.
- Funds may be used to pay students or temporary staff provided funding is available at the time of hire.
- Funds may NOT be used for summer salary, supplemental pay or overload pay for regular faculty.
- Any over-spending of funds will be the responsibility of the faculty member’s department.

CSE and ORGS Guidelines for Grant Matching Funds and F&A (Indirect) Costs

- Grant proposals should request all the support needed to complete the project successfully and projects should be designed to fit within the budget limitations established by the sponsor. If the maximum award is \$100,000 your scope of work should be limited to what can be accomplished for this amount.
- Match will only be provided where it is explicitly required by the funding agency’s guidelines. Match may also be provided in those circumstances where the funder has a written policy indicating that non-required match is taken into account in funding decisions.
- Wherever possible, required match will be met from the non-committed match category (defined below) that represents support available for the project that is already provided by CMU. Non-committed match can also be listed as institutional support for programs such as NSF that prohibit committed match.
- Whenever possible, CSE and ORGS will contribute to required match for proposals with full F&A (46.5%); match for proposals with lower F&A will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
- Reassigned time (see below) is based on F&A minus any required match; thus grants that require match will qualify for fewer course releases than those with no match requirement.
- Reduced F&A will only be approved where a federal or state agency or foundation specifically limits F&A. Contracts with for-profit companies must charge the full cost of the activity including F&A and covering time of faculty, staff and students involved in the work. Requests for reduced F&A must be approved by the VPRI.
- **All requests for match or for reassigned time (course release; see below) must be submitted to your department chair at least 12 business days before the proposal deadline;** chairs will forward requests to

the Dean. Dean makes decision and, where ORGS is asked to contribute, submits request to the VPRI. Dean communicates match decisions to PI and ORGS research officer.

- Regular faculty should use their non-instructional time (25% of semester effort if teaching a 9-hour load) as match, providing it is not already committed to other grants or proposals.

Non-committed match: In general this includes personnel, facilities or equipment that CMU pays or supports regardless of whether the grant is awarded. Examples: a) equipment owned by CMU that can be dedicated in part to the project, b) CMU faculty devote a larger portion of their time to the project (typically via reassigned time) so spend less time on teaching, c) CMU staff with research responsibilities devote a portion of their time to the project, and d) unrecovered F&A (indirect) where the sponsor's cap is less than the federally negotiated rate.

Committed match: This is match that is a) specific to a particular project, and b) involves expenses that would not be incurred if a grant were not funded. Examples include summer pay for project-related work or purchasing supplies and equipment that are only required by the grant-funded project. CSE provides committed match only when all three of the following apply: 1) match is required by the sponsor; 2) the required match cannot be covered by non-committed funds; and 3) with prior approval of the Chair, Dean and Vice Provost for Research.

CSE Faculty Reassigned Time

To promote research CSE and ORGS will, under certain circumstances, fund research reassignments for regular faculty during the academic year. "Reassigned time" indicates time, equivalent to the workload for a **3-hour course**, that is reassigned from teaching to research. Reassigned time will be allocated under the following system in accordance with the guidelines below and consistent with existing policies and practices. As stipulated in the CMU-FA *Agreement*, any adjusted workload must be recommended by the department and approved by the Dean.

- 1) **New Faculty time:** Newly hired members of the regular faculty receive 3 hours of reassignment in each of their first two semesters at CMU; some may receive more than this under the conditions of their hire.
- 2) **Grant Supported Reassigned time:** CSE and ORGS may fund reassigned time for **regular** (tenured or tenure-track) faculty who garner funded external **research** grants or contracts that include F&A costs based on the following guidelines and with the **prior** approval of the department chair, Dean and VPRI. The cost of Grant Supported Reassigned time will be covered 50:50 by CSE and ORGS and is in place of other ORGS reassigned time policies that apply to faculty members from other colleges.
 - In all cases, reassigned time requires the **written approval (via Cayuse) of the Dean and VPRI before submitting the proposal**. Research-reassigned time cannot be negotiated after the award of a grant.
 - Scheduling of reassigned time must be planned in conjunction with departmental teaching schedules and recommended by the department chair and approved by the Dean.
 - **Allocation of reassigned time is NOT automatic.** Consideration of reassigned time must take into account researcher workload and time commitments, as well as required project match and the availability of net F&A needed to pay for reassigned time.
 - Reassigned time equivalent to one 3-hour course may be provided for every \$20,000 in **net** F&A funds (equivalent to a ~\$65,000 grant with full F&A). Thus a \$270,000 grant at the current full F&A rate (46.5% yields about \$85,000) could provide 4 course releases.
 - For grants within CSE: net F&A is calculated as the total F&A amount less any match (defined below). **Net = (total F&A) - match**. Thus, a \$150,000 grant with full F&A that required a 10% match (\$15,000) would generate \$32,611 in net F&A (\$47,611-\$15,000) and could qualify for one course release rather than two. Match for this calculation is "committed match" as defined above.
 - For grants that include faculty from other colleges: the net F&A funding available for CSE faculty for reassigned time will be: **Net = [(total F&A)/number of colleges] - (CSE match + any match from ORGS attributed to CSE's part of the project)**. Match for this calculation is "committed match" as defined above. Example: grant with \$60,000 F&A split between CSE and one other college and requiring a match of \$10,000 would be: net = \$60,000/2 - \$10,000 = \$20,000 so will qualify for one course release.
 - Reassigned time will only be awarded in units of 1 course (3 hours). For example, a grant with \$30,000 in net F&A costs will not qualify for 1½ units of reassigned time.

- Reassigned time is awarded for individual grants and contracts; it cannot be earned by adding multiple small grants or contracts. The goal is to provide a block of time for faculty to focus on a large project.
 - Reassigned time (in one-course units) can be allocated among co-investigators from CSE based on an agreement made prior to submission of the proposal.
 - Grant-supported reassigned time must be taken during semesters that overlap with the active period of the grant; reassigned time is intended to allow faculty to focus on the funded research.
 - Faculty who earn more reassigned time than they can use during the grant period cannot “bank” that time for future use. However, CSE and ORGS will consider requests for additional release time for grant-active faculty members as short-term bridge funds to support research between grants (see above).
 - Reassigned time for research is contingent on departmental commitment to meet their enrollment (SCH) goals and deliver their academic programs.
 - Faculty who have a reduced teaching assignment for research as part of their initial appointment are expected to obtain significant grants and are only eligible for additional research-reassigned time when they have grant support in excess of that required to provide their existing reassigned time.
- 3) **Department Discretionary time:** Reassigned time may also be granted to individual faculty members who are actively engaged in research, as recommended by the departments (and pending approval by the Dean). Funds to support discretionary reassigned time may be provided by the college to departments as the budget allows. Departments may supplement this category with their own discretionary funds, although the workload change must be approved by the Dean regardless of funding source.

REASSIGNED TIME GUIDELINES:

- **Reassigned time is contingent on fulfilling all other teaching and service obligations.**
- Reassigned time will normally be granted in blocks of 3 hours, although reassignment of 4 or 5 hours may be appropriate in some instances. All reassigned time will be **at least 3 hours** in any semester.
- The **maximum** reassigned time provided for any individual in a single year is **12 hours from all CMU sources** including items 1-3 above and any other CMU programs (*e.g.*, President’s and Provost’s Research Awards). Additional reassigned time in excess of the 12 hours per year can be covered through grants that pay for the faculty member’s actual (not replacement) costs. Exceptions to this limit may be granted under highly exceptional circumstances; all exceptions require prior approval of the Dean.
- **Overload teaching:** The Dean will not approve a teaching load below 9 credit hours in a semester for any faculty member in CSE who has an overload (or out-of-load) appointment (*e.g.*, to teach an on-line course) in the same semester. Specifically, such faculty are not eligible to receive reassigned time from teaching under the ORGS-CSE grant-funded reassigned time program, CSE faculty release time (FRT) program or any other University reassigned time program. Exceptions to these guidelines may be approved by the Dean on a case-by-case basis.
- Chairs are responsible for allocating discretionary time, which must be allocated to promote or enhance research. Departments can establish their own criteria and processes, but the Dean must approve workloads.

Fixed-Price Contracts

Budgets for all fixed-price contracts must be approved by CSE before proposals are submitted. Budgets for such contracts should be developed to cover actual anticipated costs of doing the proposed work. Estimated costs should be as realistic as possible and include faculty time and benefits. Because CMU is a public institution, we should neither profit from nor subsidize work for external clients. **All** activities relating to the contract should be charged to the contract account: personnel, supplies, instrument fees, vehicle time, *etc.*, and include full F&A.

If funds remain in the contract account at the end of the project, half of the remainder, up to a maximum of \$2,000 (half of \$4,000), will be kept by CSE in a professional development account for the PI. Any excess will revert to CSE. Examples: \$600 remains, PI has access to \$300; \$4,500 remains, PI has access to the maximum \$2,000.

Pre-Proposals

All pre-proposals must be routed through ORGS-CSE proposal process. This policy applies not only to formal pre-proposals required by many funding agencies, but to any instance where a budget or scope of work is sent to a potential funder or directly (by you) or indirectly (by a colleague) to the sponsored programs office at another University. Full proposals will not be allowed where this policy is circumvented. The rationale for this policy is to avoid unnecessary time crunches when an “unknown” (to ORGS) preproposal surfaces as a request for a full proposal with a short turn-around. The policy also ensures that funders and collaborating institutions only receive budgets that have been subject to institutional oversight. Unauthorized preproposals frequently contain deliberate or accidental omissions that may jeopardize relationships with funders or partner institutions, as when an industrial sponsor discovers the cost of a contract is twice what they expected because the faculty member developing the budget neglected to include the cost of their time or F&A.

This policy does not apply to informal discussions with colleagues at other institutions regarding a possible collaborative proposal, nor to white papers requested by an agency, **except** where these include a budget.

Graduate Student Support

Graduate student support should be budgeted as full-time, calendar-year support, including tuition. The dean’s office will not approve proposals that include only academic year support. The rationale is to ensure that graduate student research assistants receive an appropriate level of support, which in turn will help recruit better graduate students and benefit grant-funded projects. Some other considerations:

- It is possible to pay graduate students on an hourly basis during the summers (*i.e.*, as an hourly employee rather than a graduate assistant). In this case, the weekly pay should be equal to that provided during the academic year. Paying students on an hourly basis can reduce the amount of tuition included in the budget, but the grant must include sufficient tuition to allow the student to graduate in a timely manner. It is also important to remember that there are non-discretionary **FLSA restrictions** that apply to non-exempt hourly employees (graduate students are in this category). Hourly employees must sign in and out at the start and end of work and must receive overtime payments of 1.5 x their hourly rate for each hour worked in excess of 40 hours a week (but grants will not pay overtime). Neither the employee or employer can agree to waive the FLSA overtime rules, nor can comp time be offered in lieu of overtime.
- Graduate student support for a shorter period (*e.g.*, semester) may be allowed on a case-by-case basis for small grants or contracts where funding is limited. Students should be supported full-time for the covered period.
- Summer-only full-time support for a graduate student may be allowed on a case-by-case basis for small grants, when the student will be supported as a teaching assistant or CMU-funded research assistant during the academic year. The guiding principle is that students working on a grant-funded project should be paid to do so wherever possible.