Office of the Provost
Internal Grant Programs

Review Committee Guidelines

The Review Committee is provided a copy of the applicable program announcement that contains requirements for each program, eligibility, and the application procedure (title page, 3 page narrative, budget form, budget justification, supporting documentation, allowable costs, and unallowable costs).

All full-time faculty, regardless of rank and track, on the USC Columbia Campus and Regional Campuses are eligible to submit proposals to the internal grant programs, except for the Visiting Scholars Program for which only Columbia Campus full-time faculty are eligible.

The Review Committee is charged to provide merit review of proposals to the Provost's Internal Grant Programs. The committee members rank the proposals from the most meritorious to the least. If the committee has any recommendations on the funding level for individual proposals, the committee will send those recommendations with justifications to the Provost for review and decision as to the amount to be funded.

Generally, Review Committee members are expected to review proposals outside of scheduled committee meetings in preparation for discussion of the proposals in committee meetings. Committee members are asked to provide comments and ratings for their assigned proposals; however, they may recuse themselves from specific proposals or defer to other committee members with specific expertise necessary to appropriately evaluate a proposal.

Course buyout is limited to one (1) courses for any project period/fiscal year (so two courses for two-year projects). Each course is eligible for funding up to $6,500 based on the department's current rate, regardless of discipline or program. Faculty members are permitted to request course buyout and summer compensation.

General Guidance for Reviewers

The Office of the Provost has a policy of providing reviewer feedback/comments to applicants anonymously. Committee reviewers are asked to avoid comments that may identify them. All comments made should be in a manner suitable to be posted.

Peer review is very valuable to the applicants. Focus on providing constructive feedback, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses. The most helpful comments identify a specific problem or issue, show why it is a problem or issue, and suggest one or more ways to improve.

Each Review Committee member will utilize a web-based on-line review program to provide ratings and comments. Ratings will range from 1.0 (Exceptional) to 5.0 (Poor), in ½ point increments. Please note that comments are limited to 1,000 characters and may be edited by the program administrator. Reviewers are able to edit their comments and ratings within the program, as well as see other reviewer comments at the bottom of each proposal rating

page. Additional instructions on how to use this program are provided at the first committee meeting.

The on-line review rating table follows and is based on the scoring methodology used by major funding agencies. This is also the same scoring table being used for all other internal grant programs offered by the University.

Scoring Table

Impact	Impact Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
High	1.0	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
	1.5	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
	2.0	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
Moderate	2.5	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
	3.0	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
	3.5	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weakness
Low	4.0	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
	4.5	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
	5.0	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses

Definitions

Minor: easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen the impact of the project.

Moderate: weakness that lessens the impact of the project.

Major: weakness that severely limits the impact of the project.

The committee will make recommendations to the Provost based on the quality of the proposals in accordance with the following review criteria.

Scholarly and/or Creative Merit:

- Does the proposal provide a compelling argument for the scholarship or the creative work/activity proposed?
- Does the proposed project represent a significant contribution to the field of study? If so, how?

- Is there a probability of a performance, exhibit, recording, juried showing, artwork, compositions, creative writing, publication or other public dissemination?

Nature of Proposal:

- Does the proposal provide a clear statement of overall project objectives?
- Is the proposed methodology appropriate and realistic?
- Does the proposal provide a sound justification with clear and specific budget information?
- What is the likelihood the project goals, timeline, budget and outcomes will be accomplished?

Impact:

- Will the project lead to further scholarly activities or to further creative work/activities?
- Does the project help build creative and/or scholarly networks and/or academic reputation for the individual and/or the university?
- Will this project positively impact the community?

Optional Criteria:

- If the proposal is a continuation of a previous project, does the proposal include information about the impact and successful outcomes of the previous project
- Does the proposal reflect an interdisciplinary initiative or significant innovation?
- Does the proposal reflect involvement of undergraduate students in a research initiative?