

SPARC Graduate Research Grant

2020-2021 Review Criteria

Reviewers will score the overall proposal and make substantive comments to address the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. Reviewers will evaluate the proposal for its potential to make a significant impact, which is a function of 1) the importance of the proposed project within the discipline, 2) the strength of the project design and the likelihood of the project being completed, and 3) the significance of the project to the student's graduate education experience.

Each proposal will be given an overall score based on the criteria below using this scale:

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
2.5	Very Good	strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
3.0	Good	strong but with at least one moderate weakness
3.5	Average	some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
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

Minor = easily addressable weakness that has minimal effect on project impact

Moderate = weakness that lessens the impact of the project

Major = weakness that severely limits the impact of the project

Intrinsic Merit

- Does the proposal describe a compelling and well-justified project?
- Does the author make a strong argument for the significance of the project?
- Is there a clearly articulated research question/hypothesis/creative project?

Project Design and Likelihood of Completion

- Is the proposed project supported by relevant background information?
- Are proposed activities/methodologies appropriate and clearly linked to the stated objectives?
- Does the timeline provide a clear, detailed and feasible plan for completing work within the given timeframe?
- Is there a clear and specific plan for sharing work with appropriate national or international audience (presentations at professional conferences/performances/ exhibitions or planned publication submissions) in addition to Graduate Student Day?

Student Qualifications and Impact on Graduate Education

- Is there strong evidence that the student is sufficiently prepared to execute the project (through prior experience, coursework, etc.)?

- Does the Faculty Advisor provide an excellent Letter of Recommendation demonstrating detailed knowledge of the student's abilities and skills?
- Will this funding significantly advance the student's graduate education experience and progress towards the degree?

Resubmissions

- Does the student explain how the proposal was revised in response to the previous reviewer comments?
- Does the student adequately address the reviewer concerns in the proposal?

Please make substantive comments on each proposal, bearing in mind that your comments will be seen by the student. In addition to a funding opportunity, the SPARC Graduate Research Grant program is also a training opportunity for graduate students to learn how to write competitive proposals.