

UCRCA FAQs

1. Who can apply for UCRCA funds?

The UCRCA provides recommendations to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activity concerning funding research for pre-tenure and tenured faculty employed at UNO and undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in a UNO degree-granting program.

2. What areas are funded?

The purpose of the University Committee on Research and Creative Activity (UCRCA) is to expand the capacity for research and creative activity at UNO.

For faculty, the Committee places special emphasis on recommending for funding faculty projects that lead to external funding or some other significant benefit for the researcher or artist and/or the university; which help the applicant get to the “next level” in their research or creative activity. The Committee also encourages and accepts collaborative proposals with colleagues or students that clearly show how they expand the capacity for research and creative activity at UNO.

If an applicant has already successfully obtained external funding for the proposed research or research area, the proposal will likely be less competitive than a request for expanding a new area of research that may lead to external benefits.

The UCRCA considers requests for funds from faculty in the following categories:

- Travel
- Assigned Time
- Grant-in-Aid (supplies, hourly help, materials, etc.)
- Summer Fellowships
- Minigrants

The UCRCA considers requests for funds from graduate students for expenses related to conducting research such as materials and supplies, travel, accommodation, etc.

The UCRCA considers requests for funds from undergraduate students for expenses related to conducting research such as materials and supplies, travel, accommodation, and so on OR for travel to present or perform at professional meetings.

In addition, if applicants provide permission on the cover sheet, UCRCA may share proposals with other funders on campus (such as the [NASA Nebraska Space Grant Consortium](#) or the Associate Vice Chancellor for Technology) who may have an interest and resources to fund the area of research.

3. What are the differences among the funding categories for faculty?

Travel. Travel is supported for research or creative activity purposes but not for travel to conferences or professional meetings. Travel necessary to study materials, to learn new techniques, to collect data, etc., will be considered only when it is an integral part of the research or creative activity proposal. Travel expenses may include transportation and a per diem allotment up to but not to exceed federal per diem rates (according to University guidelines) to be used for food and lodging. Every effort should be made to minimize travel costs.

Assigned Time. This category provides an applicant with time to pursue research or creative activities (instead of teaching or administrative duties) during the academic year. Funding will be provided to the applicant's department to hire an adjunct faculty member in the amount of \$2,500 for one semester or \$5,000 for two semesters. The applicant's department will be required to file a copy of the resulting Personnel Action Form (PAF) with the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. The applicant may apply for no more than .50 FTE (up to 6 workload credit hours) assigned time for work on such projects.

Grant-in-Aid. Grant-in-aid funds are available for research supplies, operating expenses, hourly help, research assistants, library materials, or other necessary expenses to conduct or complete the research or creative activity. If people other than the applicant are to be employed, the applicant must describe their specific duties.

Summer Fellowships. Summer Fellowships provide faculty with summer salary to pursue research or creative activities. (Requests for travel or grant-in-aid expenses to be used during the summer should be requested separately in the Travel or Grant-in-Aid categories.) The Summer Fellowship stipend will not exceed \$4,500. Recipients may teach no more than one summer course for the summer for which this support is provided. Faculty are limited to two Summer Fellowship awards in a five-year period.

Minigrants. Minigrants provide small amounts of money (up to \$1,000), and they do so more rapidly than normal UCRCA deadlines permit. Proposals **must justify** the need for immediate funding and provide a rationale as to why the proposal could not be submitted for a regular UCRCA full proposal deadline.

4. What are the differences among the funding categories for students?

Graduate and **undergraduate** students can request funds for research and creative activity, which would cover costs for materials, research supplies and other expenses related to the conduct of research and creative activity.

Undergraduate students accepted to present or perform at professional meetings can also request funds from UCRCA for travel to these events or meetings. Graduate students can request travel funding through the Graduate Studies office. See their website for more information:

<http://www.unomaha.edu/graduate/current.php?p=scholarships>.

5. How much can I request?

Faculty proposals may target a single category or may incorporate some mix of these categories; however, the total funds requested by an individual investigator during the academic year **may not exceed \$4,500** (except for Assigned Time, which cannot exceed \$5,000 and minigrants, which cannot exceed \$1,000). Graduate and undergraduate students may request up to \$500.

6. How often can I apply?

There is no limit to the number of times a faculty member may apply for funding; however, faculty are limited to no more than two summer fellowships in a five-year period. In addition, the committee does consider previous funding and outcomes of this funding when considering the mix of proposals under review.

Students may submit up to two proposals per fiscal year (ending June 30 each year), but priority is given to students without previous UCRCA funding.

7. By what criteria are the proposals judged?

Members of the committee assess each proposal using the evaluation criteria available on the UCRCA webpage: <http://www.unomaha.edu/spr/ucr.php>. The committee tries to make recommendations with its charge and principles and procedures in mind, including keeping conscious of the mix of funding of pre- and post-tenured faculty and students in various disciplines and the frequency and results of previous UCRCA funding received.

8. What should be included in the budget?

The budget should include as much detail as possible about the overall costs of the project and clear justification should be given for each item in the budget. Even if an applicant is requesting UCRCA funding for only part of the project, s/he should list each of the costs of the project and explain how remaining costs beyond UCRCA funding will be covered.

9. If I am asking for a Summer Fellowship, what do I need to include in the budget?

If you are requesting funding for a Summer Fellowship, you still need to show the entire costs of the project and justify these costs (see above). Simply stating “I am requesting \$4,500 for a summer fellowship” or that you need funding in lieu of

teaching in the summer does not provide adequate information or a compelling argument for the need for funding.

You must be very specific as to why this particular project requires your full attention during the summer months. The applicant should think of him/herself not as a teacher who would research if s/he had the time, but rather as only a researcher during the summer. Some possible questions to aid the applicant in articulating the justification may be:

- Does the project require travel to an archive, a particular geographic location, or performance? If so, where and why is the whole summer necessary to do so? (It may be more appropriate to ask for travel funding as opposed to summer fellowship funding.)
- Does the project require consistent monitoring which would be rendered impossible by time spent in a classroom, even for part of the summer?
- Does the project require an enormous amount of reading of primary and/or secondary material? Is there a great deal of translation involved? If so, approximately how many volumes, or pages?
- Is the applicant listening to and transcribing recorded interviews? If so, how many hours?

Again, the above are merely suggested questions to consider.

For many applicants, this section may be a place to provide more detail about his or her discipline's methodology. For example, a literary critic or historian in their methodology section might indicate they will visit a particular archive to read and transcribe papers kept in a collection. In the justification section of the application they should give the committee more insight into what "reading" and/or "transcribing" actually entails. The applicant should keep in mind that all applicants would like to have the whole summer for research. What is it about his/her particular project that makes it necessary?

10. What are some typical reasons why proposals do not get funded?

The proposal does not follow the guidelines and/or provide information in the order and within the areas articulated in the guidelines.

Faculty requesting Summer Fellowship do not include a complete and detailed budget for the project or fully justify the need for funding.

The budget and methodology or work plan/timeline are not consistent with one another.

Technical jargon is used extensively in the proposal and not clearly defined. The UCRCA committee is made up of representatives from across the UNO campus,

thus, applicants must present proposals in terms that are understandable to an educated lay audience.

The proposal does not adequately convey the significance/potential impact of the project in relation to the literature and field.

The proposal does not show how UCRCA funding will position the applicant to expand capacity.

11. Is the UCRCA biased toward a particular area or discipline?

The committee very consciously does its best to not favor any particular area or discipline in the funding recommendations made to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activity. See **above** for the criteria by which proposals are judged. See **below** for information on the diversity of representation within the committee.

12. Who are the members of the UCRCA committee?

The committee is made up of representatives from each of the colleges at UNO as well as two at-large members and one graduate student representative. Currently, members are appointed for 3-year terms by the Faculty Senate and any faculty member can volunteer to serve on the committee. Current members of the committee are listed [here](#).

13. How much money does UCRCA have to give each year?

Funding for UCRCA comes from Facilities and Administrative Costs obtained through external grant and contract funding so the amount of money the UCRCA has to give away changes from year to year. In academic year 2010, it amounted to \$\$.

14. How do I get feedback on my proposal?

Prior to submitting a proposal, technical assistance in preparing an application for UCRCA funding is available through the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research. Applicants may schedule an appointment with the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research to review examples of funded proposals.

The chair of UCRCA or their designee provides feedback to applicants whose proposals were not recommended for funding. Applicants are always welcome to contact the chair with questions. The current chair and contact information are listed on the UCRCA website.