UA Faculty Research Committee
2023-24 Fellowship Guidelines/RFP

Submission Deadline: Friday, January 19, 2024, 4:00 pm, via email to frc@uakron.edu only

Award Information and General Eligibility

- Maximum amount for individual proposals: $10,000
- Maximum amount for joint proposals: $20,000
- Proposals from all disciplines are welcome!
- All full-time tenure-track and non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty employed at the University of Akron are encouraged to apply. Faculty who received FRC grants in the previous two consecutive years are ineligible this year. See full details below.
- Joint proposals from two or more full-time tenure-track or NTT University of Akron faculty are allowed. Joint proposals must conform to the same requirements as individual proposals. Joint proposals have a maximum amount of $20,000. One person must serve as the PI.
- Beginning in 2023-24, one Community-Engaged Fellowship will be awarded specifically for scholarly or creative activity in collaboration with a partner external to the University that demonstrates potential for significant public impact to the Greater Akron region. Applicants should indicate on the checklist cover sheet if they would like to be considered for this designated Fellowship and should pay attention to the additional application and reporting criteria noted below. Proposals that are not selected for the Community-Engaged Fellowship will still be considered in the larger FRC applicant pool.
- Certain types of research grants and certain items within approved proposals are ineligible. See full details below.
- Awards generally are made in late March or early April and the funds are expected to be spent over the next 12 months. Funds not expended within the approved project period will be returned to the general fund unless an extension is requested and granted in writing.

General Information
Program Title: UA Faculty Research Committee Fellowship Program

Faculty Research Committee
The University of Akron annually provides funds for faculty research fellowships. The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate and members are appointed by the Executive Committee. The FRC is composed of representatives from the various colleges and is charged with evaluating proposals submitted by the faculty and determining which of these will be funded.

The Office of Research Administration (ORA) is responsible for the administration of this program on behalf of the FRC.

Description of FRC Fellowship Program
The goal of the program is to support and encourage the development of strong lines of research and creative scholarship by faculty members throughout the University. It is recognized that the nature of work varies significantly from discipline to discipline. In the evaluation of the research proposals, the reviewers attempt to judge the merits of each proposal from the perspective of what would be considered significant research within the field (or fields) from which the proposal is submitted.

Grants for this program, in most situations, are intended to support the development of new programs of research and creative scholarship. In this sense, the grants may be considered "seed money" for research in that they should lead to the growth and development of continuing lines of scholarship. They are not a source of funds for programs already developed to a level that normally would justify support from external agencies. Certain types of research grants and certain items within approved proposals are not considered eligible for funding from this program.

Eligibility – Full Details

1. All **full-time tenure-track and NTT faculty** are encouraged to apply. Faculty who received FRC fellowships in two consecutive years are ineligible in the third year (including for joint proposals). The Committee will consider

exceptions only in extraordinary circumstances. Those ineligible to apply for these fellowships include (a) administrators with more than four credit hours of summer administrative duty (if summer salary is chosen as a budget category) and (b) Visiting Professors. Applicants are required to notify the FRC of any change in status (e.g., from 9-month faculty to 12-month administrative faculty) during the competition period (from the submission deadline to the beginning of the award period).

- Principal investigators who have not submitted a final report, or are in deficit with a previous FRC award, are ineligible.
- Certain types of grants and certain items within approved proposals are **ineligible**. These are:
  a. Publication charges for papers, articles, or books.
  b. Research or other work to be submitted by the faculty member as part of a degree requirement.
  c. Work by students or others without substantial involvement by the faculty member.
  d. Long-term projects that have received or will require repeated support from the Committee.
  e. Commercial ventures.
  f. Administrative aspects and/or writing of proposals.
  g. Expenses for attendance at professional meetings. (This is considered a departmental responsibility).
  h. Work intended solely to improve the teaching skills or resources of the faculty members. However, the Committee may support proposals concerning the scholarship of teaching. To qualify, the outcomes of the proposed research project should be generalizable and applicable beyond the participants in the project. The faculty member should have a plan to disseminate project findings to an audience outside The University of Akron.
  i. Proposals focusing on course improvement or curriculum development are not considered as part of this program.

Proposal Preparation and Submission Instructions

In preparing proposals for this program, applicants should remember that the members of the Faculty Research Committee who will be reviewing proposals (usually 20 – 30 members) come from a wide variety of backgrounds. It is very important that the applicants be able to communicate the proposed research and the significance of this research to scholars from other disciplines, as well as provide enough detail to permit technical evaluation by those more familiar with the area.

- The formal requirements for proposals are given below and follow the checklist provided on the cover sheet. Proposals must follow these guidelines.
- Proposals are to be submitted as a single PDF document, via email, to frc@uakron.edu.
- Use a 12-point font for the proposal, with 1-inch margins.
- The proposal must be in full-page format (no columns).
- Your Dean and Chair/ Director will be notified during award setup for successful submissions.
- The Research Plan is limited to 7 pages.
- If you are submitting a revision of a previously unfunded proposal, please explain in detail (**in boldface type)** the specific changes that you made per the Committee's recommendations, if any.

Required Format

1. *Application Checklist*. Complete the checklist. This will serve as the first page of the proposal. Submit a single pdf of the completed proposal, including the checklist/cover page, and any appendices, to the Office of Research Administration (ORA) via email only at frc@uakron.edu by 4:00 pm on 1/19/2024.

   If appendix materials cannot be scanned, email frc@uakron.edu, before the deadline, to discuss arrangements.

2. *Budget Page with Justification*. This is the application's second page. The Fellowship can be used entirely for salary support or can be split between salary and other research-related expenses (i.e., to be paid for directly from a university account). A detailed breakdown by spending category is required. Please provide a clear justification for the need for summer salary. Also justify money for other expenses (e.g., purchases, travel). Prior to requesting travel consider the possibility of COVID-19 or other restrictions.

   - Maximum amount is $10,000 for single-investigator proposals and $20,000 for joint proposals. These amounts may be used entirely for summer salary or for a combination of salary and other research-related expenses.
   - The annual FRC Fellowship begins the day after the end of the preceding academic year contract period (in 2024, May 13th) and ends May 12, 2025.
   - If your plan includes travel, you may need to book travel arrangements early. Please check the box and briefly

explain what will be needed in advance and why in the box provided.

- Faculty summer salary is paid in three installments: at the end of June, July, and August.
- PI's department is responsible for completing all personnel actions in Workday (for the PI and any other employees paid on the award).
- For Community-Engaged Fellowships, compensation to partners for their role in the project may be allowed. The PI will need to work with ORA to establish a Scope of Work for the partner(s) and facilitate the appropriate paperwork to ensure payment is made.
- Non-personnel expenditures are handled via the PI's department and must follow all UA purchasing guidelines and policies.

3. _Non-Technical Abstract_. (_not to exceed 300 words_). The abstract provides an elementary review of the proposal content and must be easily understood by diverse reviewers.

4. _Research Plan_. This entire section (a-i) must not exceed **7 single-spaced pages**. Please consider the possible impacts of COVID-19 or other restrictions while drafting the research plan. The Research Plan is composed of the following sections:

   a. _Nature of Project and Significance_. This is the description of the project and should include an introduction suitable for the diverse faculty grant reviewers, a summary of what you intend to do, how it relates generally to research or creative work in your field, and why it is significant. If applicable, describe consortia or collaborative research arrangements involved in your project. For Community-Engaged Fellowship proposals, please write to the potential public impact of the project in addition to scholarly impacts.

   b. _Goals and Objectives_. The project must be clearly defined. In the case of quantitative research, you should specify the hypotheses being tested or the questions being asked. In other fields, describe the basic ideas, problems, works, or questions the project will examine, and explain the planned approach or line of thought.

   c. _Procedures_. This section should provide a detailed description of what you propose to do, including (as appropriate) methods, techniques, equipment, and facilities available for the project. For all proposals, a timetable for completing the work is essential (e.g., a writing schedule, and a data collection schedule). Proposals involving quantitative measures should use the International System of Units (SI) system of measurement.

   d. _Expected Results and Data Analysis_. This section should describe the types of results that are expected and how the data will be analyzed. Good data often has preset limits that are used to confirm or reject your hypotheses.

   e. _Publication or Presentation_. In what form will the results of the research be communicated and to what audience? Explain how this is viewed as substantive in your unit's RTP and/or merit guidelines.

   f. _Feasibility of the Project_. This includes the consideration of the background and expertise of the applicant(s) as they relate to the project. Discuss as applicable access to primary sources such as archives, travel, and foreign languages needed along with your competence in them. A list of the applicants' previous research or work relevant to the proposal should be included. This section should assure the reviewers that the applicants have the ability and/or the experience to complete the proposed research successfully.

   g. _Pertinent Bibliography_. This generally consists of 5 to 10 references in the field of study but can occasionally be longer.

   h. _Collaborators_. Joint proposals are allowed, but all applicants must be UA faculty. If you have other collaborators, please list them (and their roles) in the research proposal.

   i. _Funding Status_. Please list current funding, pending funding with status, and any start-up funding.

   This is the end of the Research Plan, limited to 7 single-spaced pages.

5. _Previous, Current, or Future Efforts to Obtain External Funding for this Research._

   a. _Seed funding._ One of the purposes of the Faculty Research Committee is to provide seed money for research

with potential for external funding. This section helps to ensure that the applicant communicates this to the readers. If the proposed project is in any way related to other external funding that has been planned, proposed, or funded, explain how the projects relate. Failure to address this section will significantly decrease your score.

   b. *Summary of funding and results of any previous University of Akron Faculty Research Committee support.* If prior support has been received from the Committee, a short summary of the amount of funding, a sentence or two describing results, and a listing of any publications or proposals (submitted and/or funded) should be included. If funding was received from the Committee within the previous three years for a similar project, explain how this proposed project is different.

   c. *Outside support.* Applicants who are submitting to outside agencies substantially similar proposals in the same cycle as this proposal should note this in the FRC proposal. If such an outside application is successful, it is required that the Committee be notified immediately. At that point a further review will determine whether there is a substantial overlap in the budgets; if there is, the Committee may, depending on individual circumstances, require the proposer to relinquish the Fellowship. Violation of this requirement may result in the investigator being ineligible to receive future funding from this committee.

6. <u>*Vita*</u>. There is a two-page limit to the vita. Focus on the aspects of your vita significant to the proposed research. If this is a joint proposal, each investigator should submit a separate vita (of no more than two pages).

7. <u>*Appendix*</u>. Survey or data collection instruments that are being developed for the proposed project should be submitted at the end of the proposal as appendix materials. These materials are not counted in the 7-page limit.

8. <u>*Institutional Committee Approvals*</u>. If the project requires approval from Biohazard, Radiation Safety, Human, or Animal Committee(s), the protocol for such approval must be submitted with the proposal. The PI is responsible for submitting the protocol to the appropriate committee. The ORA will notify the appropriate University committee if the proposal is selected for funding. Regulatory committee approval is required before any work can begin.

9. Letter(s) of Support from Community Collaborators. For Community-Engaged Fellowship proposals, a letter of support from all key collaborators should be included with the application appendices. The letter(s) of support should outline the expected benefits of the research to the organization and/or the public and the role of the community partner in the project's design, execution, analysis, and/or dissemination of final products.

FRC Proposal Processing and Selection Procedures

All proposals are reviewed by the members of the Faculty Research Committee. All proposals must be written so that committee members of diverse academic backgrounds understand the project and its significance. Proposals that only include highly technical details and discipline-specific jargon may be hard for the Committee to understand and evaluate. While technical treatment of the content is important, there should also be an attempt to describe the proposed work so a more general academic audience can understand and evaluate it.

Proposals are reviewed for their strengths and weaknesses in three areas: (1) significance, (2) methods, and (3) additional reasons to support the project. Each category has a maximum of five points for a potential total score of 15. Below are anchors for the 0-5 scale used for each of the three areas:
   Score of 5 ~ Truly excellent, no critical weaknesses.
   Score of 4 ~ Very strong with very few weaknesses.
   Score of 3 ~ Strong, but with some weaknesses.
   Score of 2 ~ Some positive features, but with significant weaknesses.
   Score of 1 ~ Several critical weaknesses.
   Score of 0 ~ Inadmissible.
Please note that decimals are allowed in the scoring.

Due to the nature of the scoring system, the numeric scores are not shared with applicants following the competition. However, the written comments by reviewers will be shared. (Reviewer identity is also not shared.)

Award Notification and Administration

- Faculty submitting proposals will be notified of the FRC's decision.

- Awards are generally made within six to eight weeks after the proposal submission deadline.
- The ORA will set up an account specifically for each funded proposal.
- Unsuccessful applicants will receive the FRC comments with the decision notification.

Award Conditions

1. Paid assistants must be University of Akron students.
2. University travel regulations apply, and costs for travel to conduct research must be at the lowest reasonable rates.
3. Upon completion of the project, equipment becomes the property of the department, or any other university unit designated by the Committee.
4. Faculty members who receive summer salary as part of their fellowship are permitted to teach **no more than four (4) credit hours in the summer** (including for joint proposals). Those ineligible to apply for these fellowships include (a) administrators with more than four credit hours of summer administrative duty and (b) Visiting Professors.
5. If an applicant's status changes (e.g., from 9-month faculty to 12-month administrative faculty), the applicant must notify the FRC.
6. Publications must credit support from the Committee with wording similar to, "Financial support for this research was received from the Faculty Research Committee of The University of Akron."
7. If the faculty's research grant account becomes overdrawn, **it is the responsibility of the faculty member or his/her department to cover the overage.**
8. The FRC will not review or fund any proposals in which the principal investigator is in a deficit with a previous FRC award. Also, the funds awarded by this Committee will not be used to pay off any grant(s) that are in deficit.
9. All research is expected to be completed during the time period indicated on the award documentation and all expenses should be charged to the PI's FRG account no later than the end date noted on the award documentation. Funds not expended by the deadline will be returned to the general fund.
10. An extension may be granted in extenuating circumstances. A no-cost extension (account will be closed; no additional spending permitted) will allow the PI extra time to finish the analysis or write the final report. An extension that allows spending along with the research may be requested for up to one year. After one year, all unspent funds return to the general fund. To request an extension, the PI must submit an email to frc@uakron.edu detailing the need for either an extension or a no-cost extension and must include an anticipated end date in which the PI intends to complete the project, including the final report.

Reporting Requirements

A final report, http://www.uakron.edu/research/ora/docs/FRC_FinalReport.pdf (generally one page in length) must be submitted to frc@uakron.edu within 90 days of the grant's end date. The report should include a listing of publications, grant proposals submitted, additional funding received, and other significant outcomes from the research. In addition, there will be a follow-up 5-year report aimed at understanding the longer-term impacts of the FRC fellowship funding.

FRC Contacts

General inquiries regarding this program should be made to:
- Jeffrey Pellegrino, Co-Chair, email: jpellegrino@uakron.edu

For technical questions relating to forms, Brightspace, regarding viewing sample awarded proposals, award set-up, and other administrative components of the FRC, contact:
- Julie Burns, ORA Coordinator & Assistant to VPRBE, x-8579, e-mail: frc@uakron.edu.