

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH PROGRAM

Description

The goal of this grant program is to make resources available to initiate the development of high-risk, high-impact, novel ideas for new research projects. The expectation is that the program will enable a new research area to be sufficiently vetted (enough preliminary data collected or theoretical calculations/simulations made) such that it can be credibly submitted to an external funding agency within six months of the completion of the project. If graduate student is involved in the project, he/she may also participate and be mentored in grant writing experience. It is not to support an on-going research project, or to extend an idea already under investigation.

The lead PI should have a T/TT primary appointment in the College of Engineering. Opportunities for interdisciplinary, multi-investigator teams will be favored. Faculty having access to discretionary funds for exploring new ideas, e.g., startup, departmental grants, and/or ISU Foundation support, must justify the need for additional funds.

Submission Information

Applications will be accepted on the following dates:

Applications due: March 26 and September 15

Start date: May 16/August 16 for applications submitted in March (summer/fall) and January 1 (spring/summer) for applications submitted in September. The total project can be up to 7.5 months. The PI(s) and/or the Department are expected to commit 20% cost share. In exceptional cases, COE may fund up to 100%.

Applications should be emailed to Dr. Lori Jarmon, ljjarmon@iastate.edu. The application should contain the following elements:

1. Cover Page – Provided cover page form is required with Department Chair signature.
2. Project Description – maximum 3 pages: An overview of the overall research idea, a discussion of the challenges expected to be overcome by the exploratory project, and the expected agencies/programs to which the idea will be submitted if the project results are favorable. Cited references do not count within the page limit.
3. Budget and justification – budget template provided
4. 2-page CV for the PI (only) that includes the active grants for the last 3 years and pending support.
5. Suggestions for possible reviewers for your proposal.

6. A single paragraph that concisely outlines the gap in our current knowledge that your proposed work seeks to fill. This is to help reviewers accurately assess the innovative impact of the research.

A typical request will be \$10,000 - \$30,000. Unspent funds will revert back to the College. Funds to support equipment purchases are not allowable in this program, but materials and supplies necessary to collect preliminary data are allowable.

Review Criteria

Innovation: The novelty, creativity, and/or riskiness of the question posed or methodology proposed. It is not sufficient for the research proposed to be novel for the researcher him/herself; it must be novel to the disciplinary field(s).

Potential Impact: The sheer force of the discovery on discipline(s) of a successful project.

Fundability: Title and due date of the external targeted opportunity and the likelihood that the project will receive external, government, industry, or foundation, funding upon completion.

Application Quality: The strength of the argument and plan. It is helpful to communicate discipline-specific information to scientific researchers out of the immediately related discipline(s).

Need: The PI team should not have access to any other funds to support the proposed research.