

**California University of Pennsylvania**  
**Funds for Student Research Projects**  
**Call for Proposals (CFP)\***

This CFP is for a program that supports semester-long student research projects with funding for research materials and student stipends. Proposals may request any level of support up to \$2,000 which includes a maximum student stipend of \$750. Total annual funding of \$15,000 is available, which is divided between support of fall semester projects and spring semester projects. The program is administered through the Cal U Center for Undergraduate Research.

*\*\*We encourage proposals on the social, economic, political, geopolitical, literary, psychological, biological, and other discipline specific impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic\*\**

## 1. Explanation of Program

The goal of student research at California University of Pennsylvania is to contribute to the academic and professional success of students. This goal will be achieved by students and faculty members engaging together in research, scholarship, and/or creative activities. Such activities increase student academic challenge, increase faculty/student engagement, improve students' perceptions of their self-efficacy, and make students active participants in their own educational development.

Each year, California University of Pennsylvania, through its Center for Undergraduate Research, makes available funds for student/faculty teams to carry out research, scholarship, and creative activities that will promote student growth and make original contributions to their academic or professional disciplines. Students in all majors are encouraged to apply for funds to support activities that meet this definition of 'research': *any inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.* (Council on Undergraduate Research, [www.cur.org](http://www.cur.org))

## 2. Overview

Funding will be allocated on a semester-by-semester basis. Two categories for proposals have been established and both proposal categories allow student stipend requests of up to \$750. Category 1 proposal requests are capped at a maximum of \$750 per semester, including student stipend, and are recommended when the predominant project expense is the student stipend. Category 2 proposal requests must be in the range \$751 to \$2000, including student stipend. **Applications for student research funds will be accepted on a rolling basis in 2021-2022 to give flexibility to students and faculty as they navigate the evolving teaching environment during the COVID-19 pandemic.** *Students who wish to receive feedback on their proposal prior to final submission are invited to send a completed draft of the proposal two weeks before the deadline.* Complete instructions for applying are described subsequently in this document.

To be eligible for funding, the proposed research, scholarship, or creative project must be performed in collaboration with, or under the guidance of, a Cal U faculty mentor or sponsor. The project must be within the area of expertise of the faculty mentor/sponsor. Projects may be carried out at Cal U or off-campus at appropriate locations (i.e., field station, library, laboratory, museum, etc.), provided that the project is overseen by the faculty mentor/sponsor. A faculty member may sponsor up to three proposals per semester. Multiple students working on the same project must author individual proposals and such proposals must be submitted as a group.

Recipients of funding are required to present their results at the *Strike a Spark Conference*. Additionally, students are encouraged to submit an abstract or proposal to present their results at a regional or national conference or event and to submit their research for publication in the *Keystone Journal of Undergraduate*

---

\* This document was adapted from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania University Biologists Student Grant program (<http://academics.sru.edu/cpub/>) and George Mason University's Undergraduate Research Scholars Program student grant application (<http://oscar.gmu.edu/students/ursp.cfm>).

Research ([www.ship.edu/keystone\\_journal](http://www.ship.edu/keystone_journal)) or a journal in the student's area of study.

### 3. Application Guidelines

#### A. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

1. Any undergraduate or graduate student currently enrolled in a degree program at Cal U is eligible, provided that the applicant:
  - a. is in good academic and conduct standing, according to the requirements stated in the university catalog,
  - b. is, by the semester in which the work will be executed, at least a sophomore undergraduate, or graduate student according to the requirements stated in the undergraduate catalog, and
  - c. performs the proposed work in collaboration with a Cal U faculty mentor/sponsor who is routinely available to the student during the semester in which the work is conducted.

#### B. Project Expenditures

1. Allowable Expenditures:
  - a. Consumable Supplies & Specialized Services - Funds may be used to defray the cost of specialized services and/or consumable supplies that are not available in the student's academic department. Examples: specialized chemicals, postage, specialized office supplies, boat time for aquatic sampling, artistic media, transcription, microfilm printing, live specimens.
  - b. Equipment - Funds may be used for the purchase of specialized apparatus and/or equipment not generally available in existing campus facilities. Examples: specialized lenses for microscopes, software for linguistic analysis, media/sample storage containers, books, films, other media.
  - c. Travel – travel costs incurred as part of conducting the research are eligible for funding. Such costs may include transportation to field stations or museums, mileage, meals, lodging, and must conform to university travel requirements.
  - d. Publication – fees charged by professional publications or conferences to publish research results may be paid.
  - e. Stipend – applicants may, or may not, apply for a stipend. Stipend options are shown below along with the federally mandated maximum hours of work for each:
    - i. \$200 stipend (maximum of 27.6 hours of work)
    - ii. \$350 stipend (maximum of 48.25 hours of work)
    - iii. \$500 stipend (maximum of 69 hours of work)
    - iv. \$750 stipend (maximum of 103 hours of work)
2. Ineligible Expenditures:
  - a. Funds cannot be used to purchase supplies or materials that can reasonably be expected to be available in a student's academic department. For example, pH meters, copy paper.
  - b. Travel expenses associated with attending professional meetings are not eligible for funding. Support for these expenses may be available from other sources on campus, including the Center for Undergraduate Research Student Travel Fund.

- c. Funds cannot be used to pay salaries, stipends, or consulting fees, beyond those described above as *Allowable Expenditures*.

### C. Additional Requirements and Information

1. The maximum award, including any student stipend, for a Category 1 proposal is \$750 per semester. The maximum award, including any student stipend, for a Category 2 proposal is \$2,000 per semester. Category 1 and Category 2 proposals may be funded fully, partially, or not at all.
2. Student funding recipients shall be limited to one award per semester.
3. A faculty member may sponsor up to three funding proposals per semester.
4. Each proposal may have only one student author, though multiple students may submit multiple proposals for collaborative work on a single project. Such proposals must be submitted as a group.
5. Proposals must be submitted prior to conducting the research or creative work for which funding is being sought.
6. It is expected that funded research or creative work will be completed within the semester that the funds are awarded. Failure to comply may impact future funding under this program.
7. Reapplication for funds for on-going projects that have been approved and funded in a prior semester may be made by submitting another proposal in the next cycle.
8. Proposals will be assessed on the basis of their academic merit, the quality of the project design, the value of the proposed outcomes, and the feasibility of successfully completing the proposed project. The quality and clarity of the proposal (i.e. how well the proposal was written and how well the guidelines were addressed) will also be taken into consideration.
9. Late proposals, incomplete proposals, proposals that do not meet the page limit and font and margins requirements, and/or proposals that are not sponsored by a Cal U faculty member with expertise in the project area will be rejected.
10. All materials or equipment purchased will become the property of Cal U.
11. Research activities must be carried out at Cal U or at an appropriate off-campus location (i.e., field station, library, museum, research center, laboratory, etc.), under guidance of the Cal U faculty mentor/sponsor who is routinely available to the student during the semester in which the work is conducted.
12. Students with funded proposals are required to submit a brief (1-3 page) report describing the results of their projects at the conclusion of the funding period. This report must be read and approved by the mentor/sponsor. Failure to submit a report will render the student recipient ineligible for future funding under this program and may impact the eligibility of the student for travel support by the Center for Undergraduate Research and the eligibility of the sponsor/mentor for future funding under the program.
13. Recipients are required to present their results at a campus-wide event (e.g. Cal U Strike a Spark Conference, or other appropriate event). Students are encouraged to submit an abstract or proposal to present their project at a regional or national conference or event. Students are also encouraged to submit their project for publication in the *Keystone Journal of Undergraduate Research* ([www.ship.edu/keystone\\_journal](http://www.ship.edu/keystone_journal)) or a journal in the student's area of study.
14. Publications and/or presentations resulting from the funded work must acknowledge support from the Cal U Center for Undergraduate Research.

#### 4. Instructions for Submitting Proposals

This application is for competitive funding. Always use complete sentences and a professional tone. Consult with your faculty mentor/sponsor for advice on style, such as the use of passive voice or the first person. Different disciplines have different conventions. Your audience is an interdisciplinary group of faculty from across campus. Be sure to explain concepts and define acronyms that will not be familiar to a general collegiate audience. The process of completing this application increases your skills in written communication and general understanding of the research process. All proposal materials should be typed, using 12 pt font, single spacing, and 1" margins. The proposal must contain the following sections:

**A. Cover Sheet** – Fill out the *Cover Sheet* form (a fillable pdf document) and save that document.

**Sections B, C and D below should be typed pages in a separate document from the Cover Sheet form (Section A) and the Budget form (Section E below)**

**B. Cover Letter** – maximum 1 page

Describe the proposed project in a brief statement and be sure to include your academic/professional goals. Also describe the genesis of your project, that is, how you became interested in the project. For example, “This project is part of my chemistry professor’s current research” or “I came up with this idea when...” Answer the question: *What interests you about this project?*

**C. Project Description** – maximum 2 pages

In this section, be sure to include the following:

- 1. *Introduction*:** Clearly state your scholarly/creative question and establish how it will contribute to a current disciplinary conversation. How will your original project address a knowledge-gap in your field? Cite appropriate research and/or creative literature using in-text citations. Creative and/or performance based projects may describe the work of others as exemplars. Answer the questions: *What is your project? Why is it significant?*
- 2. *Process*:** In this section, describe the creative process, research design, and/or methods you will employ to complete the project. Include the approvals or acknowledgement of submission (IRB, IACUC, etc.) and materials and equipment necessary to complete the project. If you need resources not available at Cal U (e.g. a unique instrument or manuscript) obtain permission to access those resources before submitting your proposal and include a statement to that effect in this section. Answer the question: *What will you do to answer your question or complete your creative activity?*
- 3. *Timeline*:** Describe how you will allocate the time needed to complete the project. Consult with your faculty sponsor/mentor regarding the different sections of the project and provide the review committee with a plan of work including detailed timetables for the semester. You may extend the timeline beyond the academic year as needed; however be clear what work will be performed during the funded semester of the project. Answer the question: *How will you schedule your time so that you will be able to complete your project by your deadline?*
- 4. *Expected Outcomes*:** Describe the anticipated outcomes, product(s) and/or result(s) of the project. How these results will contribute to the scholarly and/or creative community should be explicit. Identify where the project outcomes may be publicized. For example, Cal U Strike a Spark Conference, a professional conference, a publication submission, juried show, and/or performance, etc. Answer the questions: *What will you produce? How will your results/creative activity be disseminated in your field?*

**D. Bibliography** – Maximum 1 page

Include a list of the references cited in the project description. Use the style appropriate to the discipline. You may also include a selection of works consulted as space allows.

**E. Budget** – Fill out the *Budget Form* (a fillable pdf document) using the instructions provided on the form. The budget form should indicate how the award will be used to support your project. The budget should list all expenses and their associated costs and then a justification/description of why each expense is important to your project. For materials and supplies, prices and sources should be included in the justification.

Students may, or may not, include funding for a stipend. If a stipend is sought, select from the three amounts (\$200, \$350, or \$500) and include that amount in the budget table. The maximum stipend is \$500 and, in order to avoid violating the Federal minimum wage laws, the hours may not exceed 27.6 for a \$200 stipend, 48.25 for a \$350 stipend, or 69 for a \$500 stipend. For justification of the stipend indicate that these funds will be compensation for your time related to the project.

Additional sources of funding for the project, if any, should be listed. Category 1 projects with proposed budgets that exceed \$750 will only be considered if additional funding has been secured to cover the project cost in excess of \$750. Category 2 projects with proposed budgets that exceed \$2000 will only be considered if additional funding has been secured to cover the project cost in excess of \$2000.

**F. Student Resume/CV** – Maximum 2 pages

**G. Faculty Mentor/Sponsor CV** Maximum 3 pages

**H. Letters of Support** – Minimum of 1 letter

A letter of support from the faculty mentor/sponsor for the proposed project must affirm the project's feasibility and the student's relevant academic background, qualifications, and potential to complete the project. Additional letters of support attesting to permission to access resources not available at Cal U are recommended, if they apply to your project.

**5. Submission Process**

Students who wish to receive feedback on their proposal prior to final submission are invited to send a completed draft of the proposal at least two weeks before the deadline. A Preliminary Review Team will be comprised of members of the Undergraduate Research Advisory Council (URAC). The team will review preliminary drafts of proposals and provide feedback within one week of receipt of the draft. Draft proposals must be received not later than two weeks before the last class day of the semester prior to the semester in which the student will execute the project.

**ROLLING acceptance of proposals for 2021-2022.** Proposals will be evaluated by a committee of at least five URAC members, minimally consisting of one representative from each college.

Funds will be administered by the Center for Undergraduate Research.