
ADVANCING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Consistent with Office of Research goals to spur interdisciplinary research and establish new partnerships within and beyond the institution, the *Advancing Collaborative Research Program (ACR)* is meant to encourage both internal and external collaboration; enable new teams and/or new lines of research; and advance high-potential, high-impact activities to the next level. A successful ACR concept would be of sufficient caliber to achieve several of the following outcomes:

- Promote productive and sustainable research collaborations and productivity among faculty that would otherwise be unlikely to occur.
- Promote work that is high risk, high return, with a potential for high reputational impact.
- Position MSU faculty to compete successfully for significant external funding and long-term sustainability of the research endeavor.
- Promote the development of research activities with significant, long-term commercial potential and/or broad community or global impact.

The ACR Program enables such opportunities by supporting research and scholarship that is leading-edge, interdisciplinary, and lays the groundwork for centers of excellence at Mississippi State University.

ELIGIBILITY

Awards under this program are made through a competitive process, based on a proposal submitted by a multidisciplinary or multi-institutional team of participating faculty.

- Eligible applicants include any MSU faculty member (including research faculty) with at least an 80% FTE appointment and expectation to conduct research. Faculty with clinical, instructional, visiting, or adjunct appointments are not eligible.
- Eligible teams must include two or more MSU faculty members from at least two distinct colleges.
- External collaborators from non-MSU organizations are strongly encouraged, but these individuals are not eligible to be the corresponding principal investigator on the proposal.
- Any principal investigator who has received funding from the Office of Research and Economic Development in the past **IS** eligible to submit a proposal to this program and the application will be considered if:
 - The PI has met all requirements of former awards within budget and timeframe.
 - The PI can provide data/evidence that the previously funded project was successful and impactful.
- Investigators cannot be PI or co-PI on more than one ACR project but may serve as senior personnel on any number of ACR proposals or awards.

PROGRAM TRACK DESCRIPTIONS

All proposals should seek to align with the Mississippi Science and Technology (S&T) Plan (https://mississippiresearchconsortium.org/static/Mississippi_S-and-T_Plan_2021.pdf) with the goal to develop one or more competitive proposals for submission within 18 months of selection. While all proposal topics will be considered, priorities will be given to those that align with the S&T Plan, including (in no priority order):

- Advanced Materials
- Autonomy
- Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Data Science
- Sensors & Diagnostics
- Biomedical/Healthcare
- Logistics

The ACR Program awards funding for multiple tracks to support the establishment and growth of internal and external collaborations. Each track is designed to provide support for advancing a wide range of collaborations in pursuit of the program goals. Themes of these working groups should be forward-looking, envisioning where the next frontiers of science will be and how to best position MSU to meet these opportunities. The following two tracks are available:

TRACK -1: ESTABLISHING NEW TEAMS TO PURSUE HIGH-IMPACT RESEARCH

Proposals under this track are designed to build multi-disciplinary working groups made up of individuals across (a) two or more academic colleges at MSU; (b) multiple institutions within Mississippi; and/or (c) institutions outside the state. Proposals should detail a plan to identify and secure additional collaborators to focus on achieving a clear research outcome. Support for these proposals should not exceed \$10,000 in year one and \$20,000 in year two subject to an annual progress review and the availability of funding. Letters of commitment from all collaborators detailing their planned contribution will be required by the end of the first year to receive funding in year two.

TRACK -2: ADVANCING MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS

Track-2 proposals should seek to expand multi-disciplinary collaborations that will improve research competitiveness. Proposals submitted under this track should already have identified a team of collaborators and a specific research objective for which this funding is necessary to advance. Track-2 proposals should provide a clear and concise description of activities in support of the overall goals of the collaboration. A description of measurable and realistic outcomes anticipated upon completion of the proposed project should also be detailed. Support for these proposals should not exceed \$15,000 in year one and \$30,000 in year two, subject to an annual progress review and the availability of funding.

FUNDING AMPLIFIER: EPSCoR JURISDICTIONS AND MSI/HBCU

In an effort to encourage greater collaboration with Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), and institutions within EPSCoR jurisdictions, an additional \$10,000 per year is available for Track-2 proposals that include faculty from these institutions with a defined role on the project. Track-1 proposals may be eligible for the additional \$10,000 in year two once a defined partnership has been developed with a MSI/HBCU or EPSCoR institution.

Letters of commitment with sufficient detail of the meaningful contribution of the collaborator are required to receive the funding amplifier. The list of current EPSCoR jurisdictions can be found at the following link <https://www.epscordeafoundation.org/about/jurisdictions>. More information about MSIs and HBCUs can be found here: <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eo/doi-minority-serving-institutions-program>.

Project teams are eligible to apply for a renewal at the end of the award if all project obligations and reporting requirements have been met and approved.

REVIEW CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated using the following merit review criteria:

- **Scope and Significance:** Does the proposal address an important problem? If its aims are achieved, how will scientific, cultural, or artistic knowledge be advanced? What will be the effect on the concepts or methods that drive this field?
- **Team Composition:** Does the composition of the investigators indicate a high probability for development of the project into an area of prominence and leadership?
- **Collaboration:** Does the proposal articulate a plan for creating sustainable collaborations among faculty in varying disciplines, departments, colleges and/or institutions?

- **Risk:** Does the proposed work represent a high risk/high return proposition? Does the proposed articulate a credible plan to mitigate that risk and optimize the chance for reward?
- **Arts and Humanities:** In cases where extramural support is not commonly available, does the proposal demonstrate how greater distinction to the proposed initiative and to the University will ensue through dissemination or presentation in significant venues or publications?
- **Value Added:** Can the proposed research or scholarship be achieved at MSU in the absence of this support? Why is this a good investment for MSU? Is there a strong probability that this project will lead to enhanced MSU reputation and future external support? Is there a credible possibility that the work could lead to future commercial opportunity?
- **Securing Future Resources:** Does this project clearly define how it will use the grant funds to build paths to obtain identifiable and sustainable external funding that will support the research theme in the future?

GRANT CONDITIONS

- All awards are for 24 months beginning on May 1, 2022.
- All projects must meet the approvals for use of human and animal subjects, if applicable.
- General purpose equipment and computer purchases are not permitted under this program.
- Scientific equipment may be allowed with clear justification for its necessity to achieve the project's goals.
- Funds may not be used for faculty or researcher salaries/benefits; however, student salary support is allowable.
- Awards do not pay for consultants.
- Funds may not be used as cash advances for expenses.
- Awards are not assessed MSU facilities & administration costs (i.e., indirect costs).
- Awardees have discretion in the budgeting and re-budgeting of funds to meet their needs within the MSU guidelines and terms of the proposal. However, funds may not be transferred to another project, to other researchers, or other institutions.
- An annual review of every funded project will take place prior to the completion of each year of funding. Continued funding is contingent on the outcome of the annual review.
- No-cost extensions are not guaranteed. Request beyond three months from the end of the award will require a detailed justification signed by the PI's college dean.

PROPOSAL ELEMENTS AND SUBMISSION

Proposals should be no more than six (6) pages (including budget and budget justification), single-spaced, 12-point font. The following elements should be included:

COVER PAGE (not included in the pages count):

- Proposal Title
- Proposal Track (Track-1 or Track-2)
- Principal Investigator name and contact information
- Names and contact information for collaborators/collaborating institutions

COLLABORATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Focus and justification of proposed collaboration, including basic goals and objectives
- Detailed plan for how potential collaborators will be identified and secured (Track-1 Proposals)
- List major activities/projects for the collaboration, include a timeline
- Identify the role/contribution of each collaborator (Track-2 Proposals)
- Benefits/Impacts of the proposed project to MSU and Mississippi
- Plan for sustainability and external funding
- Current capabilities and limitations

- Specific metrics that will be used to evaluate the success of the collaboration

BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION

- Provide a requested budget, broken down by category, year
- Include a short budget justification
- Must include compelling justification for any subaward funding

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS (not included in the pages count):

- PI/Co-PI 2-page biosketch/curriculum vitae
- A letter of commitment from all named collaborators
- References Cited

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals should be submitted as a single file PDF via the online portal at: <https://msstate.infoready4.com>

Proposals Due: March 30, 2022, at 5pm

All applications will be screened for compliance with stated eligibility and budgetary criteria and adherence to proposal submission instructions. Non-compliant proposals will be returned without review.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Echols at katie@research.msstate.edu; 662.325.3570.