Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities Project Funding Handbook

FALL 2020 FUNDING CYCLE
10/29/2020

Fall 2020 Project Funding Pilot

The TTU Center for Transformative Undergraduate Experiences (TrUE) Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Project Funding is piloting a new structure for Fall 2020. Please carefully review the information below.

Eligibility

All qualifying undergraduate research and creative activities projects must be supervised by a TTU/TTUHSC faculty mentor. Faculty mentors can come from any TTU/TTUHSC department; however, they must hold a terminal degree (e.g. PhD, MFA, JD, etc.) in their academic discipline. To receive project support funding, undergraduate students must be enrolled at TTU as full-time undergraduate students at the time of application. The funded project must be completed prior to the student's departure from TTU or transition to a graduate program. Recent TTU graduates and graduate students are not eligible for TrUE project funding.

Funding preference will be given to students who are not already supported by an established TTU undergraduate research and creative activities funding program (e.g. Honors College Undergraduate Research Scholars, McNair Scholars, CISER Undergraduate Research Scholars, etc.).

A student who is (or will be) hired as a Texas Tech University employee to work under the supervision of a faculty mentor cannot also receive a project stipend to support work with that same mentor. If this restriction negatively impacts your application, please contact us at true@ttu.edu to discuss an alternative support mechanism.

Faculty Role in Project Funding Request

In contrast with previous years, TTU faculty mentors will complete the initial funding application. This replaces the previous letter of support requirement. A separate application for each student is required. Although the application is ultimately being submitted by the faculty mentor, project teams are encouraged to meaningfully involve the undergraduate student in the development and editing of the proposal.

Faculty mentors can strengthen their application by identifying matching resources to further support the project. This matching support can take the form of additional student financial support, research supplies, etc. Priority matching resources must come from external or departmental sources. For instance, requesting funding for the same student from both the TTU Honors College Undergraduate Research Scholars program and TrUE would not be classified as a preferentially matched proposal.

If the faculty mentor is proposing a "cash" match where the student will receive additional direct financial support, TrUE will require the FOP and a business contact to facilitate verification. If proposing an alternative form of matching support, the faculty mentor will be

asked to explain how TrUE can best verify that the student received a direct benefit from this additional support.

Undergraduate Student Role in Project Funding Request
Undergraduate students interested in receiving project funding are encouraged to proactively identify a suitable faculty mentor for their project. While the student is not responsible for submitting the initial funding application, it is expected that they actively participate in preparing the requested documentation. Students – this means you should ask your mentor how you can contribute to this work even if they do not prompt you on their own.

If a faculty funding request receives preliminary approval, the TrUE Undergraduate Research Administrator (URA) will contact the undergraduate student by email to schedule a virtual follow-up meeting. In this meeting, they will review the program requirements, provide required paperwork, and answer any questions the student may have. Faculty mentors are welcome but not required to participate in this discussion; however, no funding will be awarded until the student successfully completes all of the required tasks articulated in this meeting.

Proposal Review Process
TrUE will review faculty applications in the order they are received on a rolling basis until all project funds are committed for the award cycle. Typically, within 2 weeks of the completed funding request, a preliminary funding decision will be made. Both the faculty mentor and the student will be notified by email.

For projects recommended for funding, the student will have two weeks to schedule a virtual meeting with the TrUE URA specified in the funding decision email. If the student does not meet with the URA by the date specified in the email, they forfeit their funding opportunity. At the URA meeting, the student will receive forms to complete and submit to TrUE's Business Coordinator.

Project Funding Amounts
In an effort to maximize the impact of program funds and encourage new investments in undergraduate research and creative activities, the Fall 2020 pilot will prioritize funding for projects with matching support from department, college, or external sources. TrUE awards are made for either $500 or $1,000; however, the maximum award for a project without matching support is $500. Qualifying project match contributions must be valued at or above $500. Projects including non-TrUE matching support can request a $1,000 stipend. The project application form requests details regarding the nature and source of matching support which will need to be confirmed prior to funding.

The stipend will be awarded in two installments. The first half will be awarded after the follow-up meeting packet is submitted to the Business Coordinator. The remainder will be paid at the end of the semester after the TrUE URA has verified successful completion of all required project milestones.

What is a stipend?

A stipend means the student receives a lump sum payment directly from Texas Tech University. As there is no employee-employer relationship, funding is not tied to any accounting of the number of hours a student works on the project (i.e. no time clock or timesheet process). The stipend does not include any fringe benefits (e.g. health insurance). The intent is to provide the student the highest degree of flexibility in using the funds to support their work; however, project teams should be careful to follow all TTU operating policies regarding the acquisition of any project supplies. For instance, TrUE project funding may not be used to purchase hazardous materials subject to special procurement and safety protocols.

Please keep in mind that the stipend may be subject to taxes. Normally, TTU will not withhold any of the funding upfront for taxes. This means that students may need to report the funding as taxable income. Texas Tech Payroll and Tax Services will send a Form 1099-MISC to the student to report the award payment to the IRS if the total award payments from TTU exceeds $600 throughout the year. The student is expected to include that income on their annual tax return. All non-US resident students who do not have a US social security number will be required to complete a W8BEN form. Please be aware the tax withholding may be up to 30% for non-US residents. Student questions regarding the processes should be directed to the TTU Payroll and Tax Services Department. The Payroll and Tax Services Department cannot give tax advice, so questions about the specific tax implications of the stipend should be directed to a tax professional.

Student Documentation Process

1. The undergraduate student is responsible for responding to the preliminary award email to coordinate a virtual meeting within 2 weeks of the award notice.
2. During this meeting, the student will receive their Project Funding Award Packet.
    a. TTU Photo Testimonial Release Form
    b. Student Information Form
    c. Recipient Information Form (Required)
    d. Vendor Form (note option for direct deposit payment will speed up payment)
    e. W8BEN Form (only required for international students)
3. The Student Project Award Packet must be completed and submitted to the BC and URA with the subject line Project Funding Student Packet within 2 weeks of the meeting.
4. TrUE will process the Student Project Award Packet promptly and submit for funding; however, it is important to note that stipend payments are subject to normal TTU Procurement and Accounts Payable timelines. Depending on factors such as direct deposit versus physical check payment, stipend payments may take 4-8 weeks. **Students should note any special circumstances or concerns in their meeting with the TrUE URA.**

Funding Requirements

To ensure the best experience for each student and assist TrUE in celebrating their incredible work, each funded student is required to complete the following:

1. Complete all required documentation from follow-up meeting*
2. Take at least 3 candid photos of the student actively participating in the research or creative project, which will be submitted through the Post-Project Survey*
3. Complete TrUE Post-Project Funding Survey*
4. Submit abstract for Undergraduate Research Conference (URC)**
5. Present research at annual URC**

Please note that the second half of the project funding stipend will not be awarded until items 1-3 have been completed.
**Students planning to graduate prior to the next available URC should refer to guidance in URC Requirement section below.*

URC Requirement
Funded students are required to present their scholarly work during the annual TTU Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) in the Spring semester after they are awarded project funding. If the student receives the funding notification after the Spring URC abstract submission deadline the student will have the option to present at the next year's URC, given they have not already submitted their abstract for the current URC.

If the student intends to graduate before they have the opportunity to present at the URC, they must coordinate an alternative presentation deliverable with the URA. It is the student's responsibility to alert the URA to any concerns regarding the URC presentation requirement prior to the initial stipend payment to avoid partial loss of funding.

Process for students and Faculty

1. Faculty submits application.
2. TrUE receives project funding application.
3. TrUE reviews the application and notifies student and faculty of primary award or sends decline letter within 2 weeks.
4. Student schedules meeting with TrUE within 2 weeks of award email.
5. Student meets with TrUE to talk about deliverables and their research.
6. Student submits forms for stipend to TrUE within 2 weeks of meeting.
7. Once all stipend documentation is received, TrUE will process the award.
8. TrUE will notify the student and faculty when award is processed.
9. Student will submit photos and quotes on the post-eval to TrUE at the end of the semester they are funded.
10. Student will fulfill their URC requirement or the exception by the next Spring term.