Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities
Project Funding
External Handbook

FALL 2021 FUNDING CYCLE
9/8/2021
The Center for Transformative Undergraduate Experiences (TrUE) Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Project Funding is establishing a new structure for Fall 2021. Please carefully review the information below.

Eligibility
All qualifying undergraduate research and creative activities projects must be supervised by a Texas Tech University (TTU) or Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (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.).

Faculty Role in Project Funding Request
TTU faculty mentors will begin the Project Funding process by completing the initial nomination form. This replaces the previous letter of support requirement. A separate nomination for each student is required. Although the nomination 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 nomination.

Faculty mentors can strengthen their nomination by identifying matching resources to further support the student. 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 nomination, 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 nomination receives preliminary approval, the nominated student will receive an email prompting them to:
   a) Complete the TrUE Student Funding Application
   b) Schedule a meeting with the TrUE Undergraduate Research Administrator (URA)
   c) Schedule a subsequent meeting with the TrUE Business Coordinator (BC)

In the first (URA) meeting, the student will review the program requirements and discuss any questions the student may have. Faculty mentors are welcome but not required to participate in the (URA) meeting. In the second (BC) meeting, the student will complete all required employment eligibility and onboarding paperwork. Students should carefully review the *Student Documentation Processes* section of this document prior to the BC meeting. Funding will be awarded in accordance with standard TTU Payroll processing timelines—usually 2-4 weeks after a student completes all required onboarding paperwork.

If a student cannot complete steps a), b), and c) within two weeks of the TrUE notification email, they should coordinate an alternative timeline with the URA or risk forfeiting funding.

**Nomination and Application Review Processes**

TrUE will review both Faculty Nominations and Student Funding Applications in the order they are received, on a rolling basis, until all project funds are committed for the award cycle. Typically, decisions will be announced via email within 2 weeks of the Nomination or Application submission.

**Project Funding Amounts**

In an effort to maximize the impact of program funds and encourage new investments in undergraduate research and creative activities, the Project Funding program 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 match contributions must be valued at $500 or more in direct benefit to the student. Preference will be given to projects with larger matching contributions. Travel is an allowable expense through project funding. The project nomination form requests details regarding the nature and source of matching support which will need to be confirmed prior to funding.

The funding will be disbursed in one installment. To be eligible for future TrUE funding opportunities, the student must complete all deliverables listed under *Funding Requirements*.

**What is an EOPS transaction?**

EOPS stands for Employee One-Time Payment System. Funding through EOPS means that the student will receive a lump sum payment directly from Texas Tech University. The stipend will
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 EOPS transactions are subject to taxes. Texas Tech Payroll and Tax Services will send a W-2 Form to the student to report the award payment to the IRS. If a student is not eligible for employment in the United States, they should notify the BC to discuss alternate funding processes. Please be aware that 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 Project Funding should be directed to a tax professional.

**Student Documentation Process**

1. The undergraduate student is responsible for responding to the preliminary award email to complete the Student Funding Application and coordinate an in-person 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. **New Hire Forms**
      i. **I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification**
         1. Please look at page 3 as you will need to bring two forms of ID with you to the meeting, or you will have to reschedule the meeting.
         2. Please do not sign this form until your meeting with the BC.
         3. Foreign Students – Please contact the BC if you are not F-1 status; however, all F-1 students will complete their I-9 packet as usual.
      ii. **Employee’s Withholding Allowance Certificate (W4) Form**
      iii. **Texas Tech Biographical Data Form**
      iv. **TTU System Community Conduct, Intellectual Property Rights, Excerpts from the State Government Code, Excerpts from the General Appropriation Act**
      v. **Employee Acknowledgement**
      vi. **Proof of Selective Service Registration (males 18 – 25, US citizens only)**
      vii. **Voluntary Self-Identification of Disability**
      viii. **VEVRAA**
      ix. **TTUS Confidentiality Agreement**
      x. **Complete the TTU Student Records Confidentiality Agreements**

3. The Student Documentation Packet must be completed and submitted to the BC during the in person meeting.

4. TrUE will process the Student Project Award Packet promptly and submit for funding; however, it is important to note that EOPS payments are subject to normal TTU Payroll
timelines. Depending on factors such as direct deposit versus physical check payment, EOPS may take 4-8 weeks. **Students should note any special circumstances or concerns in their meetings with the TrUE URA and BC.**

**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 in-person meetings
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 if all deliverables are not met, future TrUE funding for both the student and the faculty mentor could be negatively impacted.

**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.

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.

**Process for Students and Faculty**
1. Faculty submits nomination.
2. TrUE reviews the nomination and notifies student and faculty of preliminary award or sends declination letter by email within 2 weeks.
3. Student must complete funding application within 2 weeks of receiving preliminary award notification email.
4. After submitting the Student Funding Application, the student will schedule their 2 meetings, first with the URA and second with the BC.
5. Student will need to review the I9 document and bring the required forms of legal identification to the BC meeting in order to fill out paperwork.
6. Student meets with URA and BC to talk about their research and fill out the necessary payment paperwork.
7. Once all employment eligibility and onboarding documentation is completed with the BC, TrUE will process the award.
8. Student will receive link for post-evaluation to submit photos and quotes to TrUE at the end of the semester they are funded or when they have completed their research.
9. Student will fulfill their URC requirement or the approved exception by the next Spring term.