Research Grants Committee (RGC)
Frequently Asked Questions

Funding:

1. Who is eligible to apply for RGC funding?
2. What kind of Research can be funded?
3. How much money is available?
4. If I received an RGC grant in the past, am I eligible for another one?
5. If I have other funding can I still be funded by the RGC?
6. If I applied for a grant during the same period I applied for RGC funds. Will this affect my chances?
7. Can RGC funds be used for travel?
8. Can RGC money be used to fund students?
9. Can I purchase equipment with RGC funds?

The Proposal:

10. What components are required to be in the proposal?
11. Are there page limitations to the proposal?
12. How should the proposal be written?
13. How do I create a budget?
14. Does my Department Chair have to sign off on the proposal?
15. Who evaluates the proposals?
16. What evaluation criteria are used to determine who receives an award?
17. What is the deadline for submitting the proposal?
18. My published research is in a language other than English; how should I list these in my data sheet and the proposal?

Procedure:

19. Which committee should receive my proposal?
20. How do I submit my proposal?
21. What if I can’t submit my form and attachments?
22. How can I be sure the committee received my proposal?
23. What date will the notice of awards be announced?
24. How will I be notified if I receive an award?
25. What do I have to do if I receive an award?
26. What if I received an award, but need an extension because I didn’t get my project finished in two years?
1. Who is eligible to apply for RGC funding?

All full-time, tenured and tenure track faculty of the University of Alabama campus, working individually or jointly, may apply. The highest priority will be given to proposals from non-tenured, tenure-track faculty, the second highest priority is for non-tenured faculty with significant research funding unrelated to the research proposed in the RGC application. More experienced faculty with established records of productivity, who are currently unfunded and exploring a new direction in their research area, will be given the next highest priority.

An individual may have support for only one RGC project at a time (whether it is a single or joint application). RGC grants are for a two-year (24 month) funding cycle. Applicants are allowed to receive only one RGC award during the two year cycle. (If the applicant received an award in 2009, the applicant is not eligible to apply for another grant until 2011).

Applicants that received RGC funding in the past must have submitted a final report detailing the results of their previous RGC project to the Office for Research prior to submitting a new RGC proposal. (If you received funding in 2006, but have not submitted a final report, you must do so before you can submit a proposal for 2008 funding).

Applications will not be accepted from visiting, acting, temporary, or emeritus faculty.

Awards may not be used to support applicant thesis or dissertation research.

Can I submit more than one application?  
No. Only one proposal will be considered for funding per investigator during any proposal submission period. An individual can only have support for one RGC project at a time (whether it is a single or joint application).

2. What kind of “research” can be funded?

“Research” is broadly interpreted by the RGC to include any creative endeavor that contributes to the corpus of the discipline or art as well as to the growth of the investigator; it is not limited to traditional academic qualitative and quantitative methodologies (e.g. basic,
applied, experimental or theoretical). The project should, however, have a concrete product that will be disseminated in a forum appropriate for the discipline. This product may be a manuscript, show, performance, or physical item.

It is also expected that a recipient of RGC funding will seek additional funding from sources external to the university to continue their scholarly activities.

3. How much money is available?

Faculty may request up to $5000 in RGC funding. One of the criteria for evaluation of the proposal is the appropriateness of the budget to the work proposed. Therefore, a detailed budget and budget justification is required to be submitted with each application.

4. What if I received an RGC Grant in the past, can I get another one?

An individual may have support for only one RGC project at a time (whether it is a single or joint application). RGC grants are for a two-year (24 month) funding cycle. Applicants are allowed to receive only one RGC award during the two year cycle. (If the applicant received an award in 2009, the applicant is not eligible to apply for another grant until 2011). Applicants that received RGC funding in the past must have submitted a final report detailing the results of their previous RGC project to the Office for Research prior to submitting a new RGC proposal. (If you received funding in 2006, but have not submitted a final report, you must do so before you can submit a proposal for 2010 funding).

5. If I have other funding can I still be funded by the RGC?

It is the belief of the RGC that Researchers who already have support for a project from within the University or elsewhere do not need RGC help, and therefore, the RGC will extend the aid to other projects. RGC grants are not “supplemental” funds to existing sources of money.

6. I have applied for a grant during the same period I applied for RGC funds. Will this affect my chances?

RGC funds shall not be used for projects that are funded from other sources. If you have not received funding for the project, it should not affect the evaluation process.

Updated October, 2009
7. Can RGC funds be used for travel?
Yes, if the travel is necessary to carry out the scholarly activity. RGC funding is not intended to support travel to professional meetings to present the results of scholarly activities. Include any travel funds in the budget submitted with the proposal, along with a justification for the travel. Costs for travel are based on the most economical means of travel for one person. If foreign travel is requested, the justification must clearly articulate how the foreign travel benefits the research project.

8. Can RGC funds be used to fund students?
Yes, RGC funds may be used to fund the salaries of both undergraduate and graduate students. Include the funds requested in the budget submitted with the proposal. Students included in the budget must be currently enrolled at the University of Alabama.

9. Can I purchase equipment with RGC funds?
RGC funds can not be used to acquire equipment that would normally be purchased by the applicant’s Department or College. Equipment purchased by the grantee may be kept in her/his custody or for use in the department or unit as long as they are members of the University faculty or staff. All equipment must be inventoried through University procedures. Upon leaving the University, the grantee must leave equipment purchased with RGC funds with his/her department.

10. What components are required to be in the proposal?

a. Proposal Narrative
   1. Abstract: one-fourth to one-half page overview of the project.
   2. Purpose/Objectives: rationale for the proposed research.
   3. Significance of the Project: to a particular field of inquiry, and the applicant’s career. **
   4. Research methods/design/plan of work.
   5. Outcomes: anticipated outcome(s), products, dissemination; relationship to subsequent efforts to obtain external funding.
   6. Timeline: a realistic timeline or incremental plan indicating when each portion of the research will be completed.

** Tenured faculty should explain within the text of the proposal why the project represents a new direction within the overall theme of
their research area, and how they envision future development of this new direction.

b. Budget- itemized along with a budget justification.

c. List of selected publications and/or exhibits.

d. List of external grant support within the past two years (including pending) with details.

e. List of external grant support applied for during the last two years including current year (but not awarded) with details.

f. RGC Electronic Application (Cover Page) Form filled out entirely.

11. Are there page limitations to the proposal?

Yes. The proposal narrative is limited to five (5) pages, double-spaced using 12-point font with one (1) inch margins. Proposals that exceed the five-page limit will not be considered for funding. There are additional attachments that must be uploaded to complete the application, the additional attachments are not included in the five (5) page proposal narrative limit.

12. How should the proposal be written?

In clear, non-technical language. The reviewers come from varied backgrounds and disciplines and may not be familiar with technically specialized language or terminology. There is no “formal” requirement on how to write the proposal, just be sure to include all the required elements.

13. How do I create a budget?

Page two of the electronic RGC application (cover page) has a form budget that you may use as a template. The Office for Sponsored Programs Grant and Contract Specialists can also help you prepare your budget. For further information on the budget and how to prepare it, please see the RGC Application package. For a list of specialists to contact for help please go to: http://osp.ua.edu/site/osp_staff_listings.html

Updated October, 2009
14. Does my Department Chair have to sign my proposal application?

No, this is not a requirement. You should, however, inform your Department Chair that you intend to submit a proposal, and send an email to your chair upon your submission. Prior review of the proposals and application packages are not required. However, to improve overall quality of RGC applications, the RGC committee strongly recommends and encourages applicants to have their complete application package reviewed by a faculty mentor or department chairperson.

15. Who evaluates the proposals?

Proposals are evaluated by one of three Area Committees within the Research Grants Committee. The Area Committees are made up of tenured faculty members from disciplines throughout the university who are appointed to a three (3) year term on a rotating basis. There is an appointed Faculty Senate Representative and four RGC liaison members. To view the committee members, please go to: http://committees.ua.edu/?page_id=199

16. What evaluation criteria are used to determine who receives an award?

1. The scholarly objectives and merits of the proposal, including the quality of the proposal presentation; how clearly the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses are developed well reasoned and appropriate to the aims of the project.
2. The identified outcomes: will the project result in a publication, exhibit, artistic performance, and/or grant application?
3. Budget: RGC funds are limited. The appropriateness of the budget to the work proposed will be a basis of evaluation for funding, as well as the justification attached to the Budget. The RGC Committee may propose funding at a level less than that requested. Any budget submitted that is over $5000.00 will not be considered for an award.
4. Priorities: The highest priority will be given to proposals from non-tenured, tenure-track faculty. The second highest priority is for non-tenured faculty with significant research funding unrelated to the research proposed in the RGC application. More experienced faculty with established records of productivity, **who are currently**
unfunded and exploring a new direction in their research area, will be given the next highest priority.

17. What is the deadline for submitting the proposal?

January 31 at 5:00 p.m. If this date falls on a weekend, the date is extended to the following Monday at 5:00 p.m.

18. My published research is in a language other than English; how should I list these in my data sheet and the proposal?

Since the RGC area committees are comprised of individuals from disciplines that may or may not be familiar with the foreign language, it would be prudent to list the items along with an English translation for thorough evaluation.

19. Which committee should receive my proposal?

The type of research you propose may fit within a traditional discipline or may be interdisciplinary. For disciplines such as history and linguistics, in which the research methodology may be oriented either toward the humanities or toward social science, please choose an area accordingly. We ask that each applicant identify the area they feel most appropriate to evaluate their proposal. The following is a listing of some of the disciplines within each of the three areas.

Area A- Physical and Biological Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering: (biology, chemistry, computer science, education, engineering, environmental science, geography, geology, human environmental sciences, marine science, nursing, physics, psychology)

Area B- Social and Behavioral Sciences: (advertising, American studies, anthropology, communicative disorders, communication, criminal justice, economics, education, finance, geography, history, human environmental sciences, information systems, international studies, law, management, marketing, nursing, philosophy, political science, public relations, psychology, social work, telecommunications/film)

Area C- Arts and Humanities: (art, dance, English, foreign languages and literature, history, international studies, music, philosophy, religious studies, telecommunications/film, theatre)

Updated October, 2009
20. How do I submit my proposal?

All proposals must be submitted electronically. Please see the RGC Manual/Application instructions.

21. What if I can’t submit my form and attachments?

If you have problems submitting, or uploading the required attachments, contact Richard Mocarski rmocarski@fa.ua.edu or Lauren Wilson lawilson@fa.ua.edu in the Office for Sponsored Programs, 348-5152.

22. How can I be sure the committee received my proposal?

Once you click the submit button on the electronic application (cover page) a “thank you” screen will appear. This ensures your submission has been delivered to the appropriate committee.

23. What date will the notice of awards be announced?

Award announcements will be made the first week of April.

24. How will I be notified if I receive an award?

All faculty who submitted proposals to the RGC will be informed by memo regarding the status of their application.

25. What do I have to do if I receive an award?

Submit the RGC Award Recipient Conditions with appropriate signatures to The Office for Sponsored Programs, room 152 Rose Administration. After receipt of the form, an account will be set up with the funds, and you will be notified.

26. What if I received an award, but need an extension because I didn’t get my project finished in two years?

No-cost extensions for extraordinary circumstances and exceptional situations may be considered on a case-by case basis. Any request for a no-cost extension must be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Research, and must include a justification and time period for completion of the project.

Updated October, 2009