

## UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO RESEARCH ALLOCATIONS COMMITTEE (RAC) GUIDELINES FOR SMALL GRANTS (< \$10,000)

### A. OVERVIEW

The primary mission of the RAC funding is to support the career development of faculty (research and creative works) who are in various stages of career development, but priority will be given to faculty: 1) in the early stage of their careers, 2) embarking upon new directions, or 3) in fields and disciplines where there is limited funding. The major objectives of RAC are to help junior faculty practice in preparing national-level proposals (NSF, NEA, etc.), to promote transition to extramural funding mechanisms, and to facilitate national exposure for research and creative works by UNM faculty.

The Research Allocations Committee (RAC) reviews and makes recommendations concerning research proposals from full-time tenure-track UNM faculty. Internal grant awards represent an important means by which the university is able to promote the scholarly and artistic activities of the faculty and foster academic excellence. The following guidelines and priorities have been established to ensure that the available funds are distributed fairly and are effective in sustaining the vitality and quality of research at the University. RAC grants can provide seed money to support NEW research or creative works, to stimulate the development of funding from extramural sources, and to bring an existing project to fruition.

### B. ELIGIBILITY

RAC funds will be limited to voting members of the UNM main and branch campus faculty (excluding the Health Sciences Center) who hold the rank of Assistant Professor or above. Applications from faculty holding the rank of Associate Professor and below will be given special consideration. Research faculty and faculty on leave without pay or on a visiting appointment are NOT eligible. Funds cannot be used for course buyout and will not be awarded to support student work leading to an advanced degree.

### C. FUNDING CYCLES AND SUBMISSIONS

**Application Period for Fall Semester:** October 1<sup>st</sup> – October 15<sup>th</sup>

**Application Period for Spring Semester:** February 1<sup>st</sup> – February 15<sup>th</sup>

**Funding Cycle:** 18 months from award notice date.

**Submission of Applications:** The application must be submitted in electronic format. Applications must be submitted as a **single PDF file of the entire grant proposal and all accompanying materials & Appendices** via the RAC proposal server (<http://rac.unm.edu>), which is only accessible during the Application Periods in Fall and Spring semesters.

### D. FUNDING PRIORITIES AND ELIGIBLE PROJECT CATEGORIES

In this section, funding priorities are listed in order of importance. In addition, extra consideration may be given to proposals combining several funding priorities (*e.g.*, a proposal by a new faculty member to support research that was favorably reviewed by an extramural funding agency but not funded). Applicants with a high degree of current extramural funding will be given less priority for RAC awards (see Budget and Justification). The funding priorities for proposals are as follows:

**1. Proposals by new faculty.** New faculty members are defined as individuals in their first 36 months as full-time faculty (tenure-track), and thus just beginning their research careers. Funding of new members of the faculty will be based on the need to establish research, scholarly, or artistic programs. In disciplines where extramural funding is available, the projects should include a specific plan and timeline for transition to such funding, or, in the absence of extramural funding opportunities, a plan for exposing the proposed work via peer-reviewed publications, presentations, performances, etc.

**2. New research/creative work direction.** Support for faculty members moving into significantly different areas of research, scholarship, and creativity. These are defined as projects that represent a new direction for the faculty, a new approach to a problem, or a creative work as yet undeveloped. The projects must be clearly designed to lead to new sources of extramural funding when such funding is available. This category does not provide support for faculty applying new techniques to ongoing research, but rather to those faculty proposing a very different set of research questions that will likely lead to new sources of extramural funding.

**3. Fields with limited extramural funding.** Support for faculty members in fields where there is little extramural funding available. The proposal should explain the limitations on available extramural funding, and describe the faculty member's effort to pursue extramural funding with the advice of department chairs and heads, college research development officers, and the Office of Research.

**4. New projects that have been favorably peer-reviewed by an extramural funding agency but were not funded, or previously funded and peer-reviewed projects which have not been renewed by extramural sources, but have a strong probability for eventual funding.** Proposals in this category must address the reviewers' comments on the proposal (if available) and describe how the RAC funding will support research germane to resubmission.

**5. Continuation of a project from a previous RAC award or continuation of an existing project.** Proposals in this category must describe the research/creative/scholarly progress and outcomes from the previous award, including research/creative works dissemination such as publications or performances, as well as grants submissions.

Any questions regarding what might constitute Eligible Projects and their priority should be directed to the RAC Committee Chair prior to submission of an application.

## **E. APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

Submit electronically and in the following order:

1. **Cover Page:** The first page of the proposal should be formatted to include the following:
  - A. Name of applicant, rank, department/division; complete campus address, phone number, e-mail address; number of years as regular faculty at UNM; and number and date of any RAC award during the past four years. For the same time period, list all publications, proposals, and other creative works that have resulted from RAC funding.
  - B. Title of proposed research/creative work
  - C. Total amount requested from RAC for this project
  - D. List of **all** current and pending research support (funding agency and amount), indicating which, if any, are related to the current RAC proposal. Current start-up funds must be included in addition to extramural support.
  - E. Signature of Department/Division Chair
  - F. Signature of Department Administrator or other person responsible for overseeing budgets

## 2. Completed Check List for RAC Grant Proposal

Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

## 3. Proposal Abstract (250 words maximum)

## 4. Proposal Narrative (4 pages maximum)

Beginning on the second page and continuing for a MAXIMUM of four single-spaced pages, discuss the elements below.

Note: Proposals with excessive jargon will not be accepted. Write in language understandable to non-specialists in the field because the RAC panel is composed of faculty from a broad range of disciplines. Explain the project's significance to the field and potential impact. Specify plans for both current and long-term dissemination of the information gained from the project.

To facilitate the review process, applicants must use a 12-point font (Arial, Times New Roman), with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom and both sides of pages numbered consecutively. A list of references as needed and more detailed descriptions of data collection measures and procedures should be provided in an appendix and will not count as a part of the 4-page narrative.

Applications exceeding the page limit or violating the format guidelines will not be reviewed.

### **In the body of Proposal Narrative, applicants should address the following areas:**

#### *1. Research and innovation*

Describe the intellectual significance of the proposed project. Provide an overview of the project, explaining the basic ideas, problems, or questions examined by the study. Explain how the project will complement, challenge, or expand relevant studies in the field. Describe any novel concepts, approaches or methods employed in the project. Emphasize originality, innovation, or creativity. Describe how the work will advance knowledge/art. When relevant, discuss potential problem areas and applicable alternative strategies. If the proposal is a revised submission of a prior RAC proposal the revisions must be described in the introduction (see section F2 regarding instructions for revised submissions).

#### *2. Methods, work plan and potential for completion*

Describe your method(s) and clarify the part or stage of the project that will be supported by the RAC grant. Provide a work plan, describing what you will accomplish during the award period and the appropriateness of the field work to be undertaken, the archival or source materials to be studied, the data to be collected, and the research site. If IRB or IACUC approval is required, please indicate the status of the application.

#### *3. Clarity of presentation*

All proposals should be written for non-specialists, avoiding undefined, disciplinary jargon.

#### *4. Budget Justification*

See section E5

#### *5. Broader impacts*

Describe the impact of the proposed work beyond its disciplinary interest, e.g., influence on teaching and on the UNM intellectual climate, outreach to larger New Mexico community, etc.

## 5. Budget & Justification

The TOTAL amount of the budget request must not exceed \$10,000 for an 18-month spending period. All other things being equal, preference will be given to proposals requesting smaller budgets. Provide justification for the budget on a separate page (*1 page maximum*). (*NOTE: F & A costs are not charged for RAC awards*). The following cannot be funded by RAC grants: faculty, and post-doc salaries; publication and dissemination costs for research and creative works. The budget must reflect the appropriate spending period.

Travel costs will only be supported as necessary to complete the research or creative work. Travel for presentation or performance of the resulting research or creative work will not be supported by RAC grants. Travel for conference presentations will not be supported.

RAC awards cannot be used towards course buyout or any partial support of a GA/RA position. Support for project assistants who are students paid hourly (rather than GA/RA) can be eligible if there is a persuasive explanation in the budget justification as to why they are essential for completion of the project.

The budget justification text must include a brief description of why each component of the itemized budget is essential to the project. The justification must also state why any other current funding/support listed in current and pending cannot be used instead of the requested RAC funds.

No-cost extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. A written justification detailing the reasons for the extension must be submitted prior to one-month before the scheduled end of the funding cycle. Unspent funds will be returned to UNM.

## 6. Curriculum Vita (CV) or Biographical Sketch

Attach an abbreviated CV that includes education, work history, and relevant grants and publications, or an NSF-format bio-sketch for yourself and for any key collaborators identified in the proposal (*2 pages maximum per person*).

## 7. Previous RAC Support, Current and Pending Extramural Funding/Support, and Start-up Funding

Describe any RAC funding (title, amount of funding; funding period) in the past five (5) years. If none, state NONE.

Provide a brief synopsis of the results of RAC funded projects during the past 5 years. If none, state NONE.

If you have had previous RAC funding, describe what if any extramural funding has been obtained as a result of this previous support. Describe this funding and provide grant numbers when applicable. If none, state NONE.

Describe ALL pending or current extramural funding (project title; funding mechanism: grant, subcontract, etc.; funding agency; amount of funding; funding period), including all other support, federal and non-federal.

Describe any current start-up funds and specify if they are committed for specific purposes. If none, state NONE.

## 8. Human Subjects: IF HUMAN SUBJECTS ARE INVOLVED, provide a description of the proposed involvement of human subjects, a signed Departmental Review Form and

Institutional Review Board (if already obtained) Approval in the **Appendix**. If IRB approval has not been obtained at time of RAC submission, it must be obtained prior to release of funds.

9. **Animal Subjects:** IF ANIMAL SUBJECTS ARE INVOLVED, provide a brief description of the proposed involvement of animal subjects, a signed Departmental Review Form, and an IACUC approval letter (if already obtained) in the Appendix. If IACUC approval has not been obtained at time of RAC submission, it must be obtained prior to release of funds.
10. **Bibliography/References:** List complete citations (2 pages maximum)
11. **Plan for Transition To Extramural Sources of Funding** (for any proposals involving research and in need of outside funding). Describe specifically how this project will be utilized to obtain extramural support. Describe funding mechanisms to be pursued, timeline for future proposal submissions, and list the extramural funding agencies to which you might submit your proposal. List any research mentors/ collaborators for this project and their role in supporting development of funding proposals. It is not sufficient to simply state that the data from this proposal will be utilized to support future applications (1-page maximum).
12. **A Letter of Collaboration** is required from other key personnel on the project (when pertinent).
13. **Conflicts of Interest:** The annual UNM conflict of interest disclosure form(s) must be completed for all the key personnel. For conflict of interest disclosure procedure, refer to UNM Research Compliance website: <http://researchcompliance.unm.edu/coi-policy>. When potential conflicts of interest exist, distribution of funds will be contingent upon approval by the Research and Compliance Office.
14. **Appendices:** If any human or animal subjects are involved, attach the appropriate approval letters here (if already obtained<sup>1</sup>). Furthermore, here you can provide a hyperlink to any additional materials you believe will aid our understanding of the proposal, such as auditory or visual supplementary materials. The time duration of linked streaming audiovisual material should not exceed 10 minutes.

## F. RAC REVIEW PROCESS

**1. Review Criteria.** RAC Reviews will focus on the areas itemized in section E4 to judge the likelihood that the proposed research/creative work will have a substantial impact. Each of these criteria will be addressed and considered in assigning the overall score. Note that the application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major impact and thus deserve a high priority score. For example, a faculty member may propose to carry out important work that by its nature is not innovative but is essential to move a field forward and is therefore still judged likely to support the applicant's subsequent extramural funding applications, substantial advancement of a project, and/or dissemination of the results.

Review criteria will be based on scientific, scholarly, or artistic merit. Review will be patterned after the NSF/NEA review process. One major objective of the RAC proposal is to provide junior faculty with practice in preparing national-level proposals and fellowships, and facilitate transition to extramural funding mechanisms **whenever possible**. All proposals will receive ratings (1-5 with 5 being the best) for each of the areas outlined for the Proposal Narrative (section), and written critiques.

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<sup>1</sup> For IRB and animal research approval letters: if the approval of the proposed research is not received by the proposal submission date, it is acceptable to include a statement that an application for approval has been submitted

**2. Revised Applications.** Revised applications will be accepted. However, there must be substantial changes in the content of the application. The application must include an *Introduction* of not more than one page that summarizes the substantial additions, deletions, and changes. The Introduction must also include responses to the criticisms and issues raised in the previous summary statement. The changes in the Research Plan *must be clearly marked by appropriate bracketing, indenting, or changing of typography (font)*, unless the changes are so extensive as to include most of the text. This exception must be explained in the Introduction. If the revision is so extensive that the revised proposal is largely unrelated to the original, the application may be reviewed as New, rather than as a revised application. Do not underline, italicize, or shade changes. The Preliminary Studies/Progress Report section should incorporate any work done since the prior version was submitted.

**3. Policy of Recusal.** Applications will be reviewed by the members of the RAC. RAC members are recused from review whenever an appearance of conflict of interest may arise (e.g., the RAC member and the proposal author are collaborators or faculty members from the same department; see also <http://research.unm.edu/coi/>). Where appropriate and necessary (if more than 33% of eligible RAC reviewers have to be recused), additional outside reviewers' opinions may also be solicited.

**4. Questions.** You are encouraged to contact the RAC Chair or any other RAC committee member to address any questions. Moreover, with consent of previous PIs, sample copies of funded proposals may be made available for examination.

## **G. SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

All recipients of research funds are required to provide reports of progress and other accomplishments related to the project no later than 30 days following the termination of the award period, or the end of any extension granted. The report should include but not be limited to manuscripts, grant applications and awards resulting from the project. Failure to comply with reporting requirements will limit eligibility for future RAC funding.

Investigators must follow University guidelines on the use of funds. Funds may be used for equipment, supplies, animals, and travel as essential to the conduct of the research. In extraordinary situations, funds may be used for technician and project assistant support. Funds cannot be used for faculty, post-doc, or GA/RA salaries.

UNM RAC will not consider proposals from applicants who have received previous funding but have not submitted the required reports at the end of the project.

All presentations and publications of work resulting from a RAC award must acknowledge having received financial support from the University's Office of Research.

**RESEARCH ALLOCATIONS COMMITTEE  
CHECKLIST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS**

**COMPLETE THE CHECKLIST BELOW, SIGN, AND INCLUDE WITH YOUR PROPOSAL.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Applicant  
\_\_\_\_\_ Rank  
\_\_\_\_\_ Department/division  
\_\_\_\_\_ Campus address, including building name  
\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone number  
\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address  
\_\_\_\_\_ Number of years at UNM as regular voting faculty  
\_\_\_\_\_ Dates of previous RAC awards (list resulting presentations, publications, grants, exhibits, etc.)
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Title of proposed research/creative work
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount of RAC funds requested
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ List of all current and pending research support
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of department/division chair
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of department administrator or other person responsible for overseeing budgets

**BODY OF PROPOSAL/PROPER FORMAT:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Maximum of 4 pages single-spaced (Appendices can be included for references, details of data collection measures and procedures; supplementary and support materials can be appended)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12 point font
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1" margins at top, bottom, and both sides of all pages
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pages numbered consecutively

**ABSTRACT**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Does not exceed 250 words

**BUDGET INFORMATION:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Itemized budget (quantity and unit costs): MAXIMUM \$10,000.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Justification of budget items

**OTHER:**

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Curriculum Vitae or biographical sketch
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Previous RAC support and other pending and current funding/support
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Copy of IRB and/or animal research letter of approval (when pertinent)
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ References: list of complete citations (*2 pages maximum*)
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ Plan for transition to extramural sources of funding (when pertinent):
- F. \_\_\_\_\_ A letter collaboration (when pertinent)
- G. \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of cover page from the dean or department chair of your college or department
- H. \_\_\_\_\_ UNM annual conflict of interest form is up to date (not attached to proposal)
- I. \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of support from department/division chair for shared costs, if applicable
- J. \_\_\_\_\_ Letter(s) of access for all resources provided
- K. \_\_\_\_\_ Appendices