

Office of the Provost Tufts Collaborates Seed Grant Program

Round VIII Guidelines 2018-2019

The **Tufts Collaborates** Seed Grant Program seeks to spark scholarship, research, and creative work resulting from cross-disciplinary faculty collaboration. Cutting-edge work often begins when faculty members desire to collaborate across institutional boundaries. As such collaboration may be forestalled by the lack of resources for the early phases of idea generation, data collection, project planning, or interdisciplinary engagement, Tufts University is committed to helping our faculty realize the extraordinary potential of interdisciplinary collaboration. Tufts Collaborates is funded by the Office of the Provost and overseen by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

Eligibility

Any Tufts faculty active in scholarship, research, and/or creative works with a primary appointment at a University school or unit is eligible to apply to the Tufts Collaborates Seed Grant Program. While Tufts faculty members with a primary appointment at the Medical Center and a secondary appointment at a University school or unit are encouraged to serve as collaborators, the lead principal investigator on a grant application must be a Tufts University employee. Non-Tufts collaborators are allowed, but their participation must be clearly justified, including the absence of the collaborator's specific expertise at Tufts. Eligible projects include both new collaborations and existing collaborations involving new areas of research.

Faculty members who have received a Tufts Collaborates award as principal investigator (PI) within the last two years (i.e. those starting in June/July of 2017 or 2016) **are not eligible** to submit a proposal as PI for a new seed grant. Those who were the PI of a grant that started prior to 2016 are eligible to submit a new proposal. The status of awards given prior to this exclusion period will also be considered in the evaluation of a new submission.

Amount and Duration

Seed grants may range from \$500 to \$50,000. Funds will become available upon implementation of the project. The grant period for Tufts Collaborates is one year. Most projects are expected to begin July 1, 2018. If necessary, a project may start earlier, but in any event, not earlier than June 1, 2018. Funded proposals should be completed and all expenditures incurred by no later than June 30, 2019 unless formal approval of project period extension is received.

Requirements

For all proposals, collaboration among at least two Tufts faculty members is required, as described below. For projects resulting in competitive grant proposals for outside funding, the potential for funding and continued collaboration must be clearly described (e.g. how the work relates to a funding agency's mission statement).

Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

- Proposals in arts, humanities, and social sciences must involve either (a) more than one school, or (b) more than one department within a school. Because federal funding is

limited for collaborative work in these fields, it is not expected that these proposals will lead to external funding.

Sciences and Engineering Proposals

- Proposals in the sciences and engineering must involve, at a minimum, more than one department within a school at Tufts. Collaborations involving at least two schools are highly encouraged. Seed grants should be used to develop the proposed project to the point of enabling the collaborating faculty members to submit a competitive grant proposal to a federal or other external funding program. Proposals that could lead to program project or center grants are especially encouraged.

Criteria for Selection

A peer-review process will evaluate proposals for intellectual merit and potential for impact.

Other criteria include:

- Clarity of goals and statement of need
- Degree of innovation and originality (within academic field and/or Tufts community)
- Feasibility of timeline
- Appropriateness of budget allocations
- The use of evaluation methods for assessing outcomes and impact, where relevant
- Extent of impact on Tufts constituencies, curriculum, and mission, measured in part by the degree to which the collaboration continues or leads to other outcomes
- The potential for outside funding, where relevant
- Feasibility of activities within departmental and/or school framework

Seed Grant Conditions

Funds may be used to support reasonable and necessary **direct** costs to carry out the project, and will only be distributed based on actual expenses of approved items detailed in the project's budget using the **Budget Form**. The principal investigator will be responsible for managing the seed grant. Funds will be disbursed to the school with which the lead principal investigator is primarily affiliated for the project. The budget should follow the policies of the applicable school(s) and Tufts University.

Funds can only be used for the activities or experiments described in the proposal, although no-cost extensions and/or re-budgeting with appropriate justification may be requested if experiments or activities have not been completed within the one year seed grant period or if there are line item budget reallocations that are necessary to successfully complete the project. Requests for a no-cost extension must be submitted 90 days before the grant end date, and both no-cost extension and re-budget requests should be submitted to collaborates@tufts.edu.

Expenditures for faculty salaries (either summer or academic year) are permitted according to school policies and appropriate approval for each collaborator. Fringe benefits charges for personnel must be included in preparing the project's budget. Student pay during the summer will be subject to the applicable rate for fringe benefits and the additional cost should be included in the budget. Student pay during the academic year (September-May) is not subject to a fringe benefits charge.

While estimated fringe benefits rates are provided on the **Budget Form**, the rate applicable in a particular circumstance may be different, based on several factors (e.g. when the compensation is paid and whether a faculty member is full-time or part-time). If a question arises as to what rate applies, the school's financial officer will provide the relevant rate.

Generally, the budget may not be used to pay for:

- Indirect costs and overhead
- Tuition costs
- Refreshment costs or meals
- Laptop computers
- Student Health Insurance

Indirect cost recovery is not available, and certain budget items are not allowable, such as tuition and insurance. The proposal review committee maintains the right to veto any budget it deems unallowable.

Any equipment purchased must be primarily for use by Tufts faculty, students, and staff for the proposed effort. Equipment purchased is property of the Office of the Provost; transfer of ownership will be considered at the end of the grant period.

The proposal review committee retains the right to veto any budget item it deems unallowable. Seed grants may be conditioned on budget modifications.

All grant funds are subject to relevant university, state and federal guidelines. Please refer to the [Tufts IP Policy](#) for questions regarding intellectual property.

Reporting requirements

Interim report: By **Friday, February 15, 2019**, grant recipients must provide to the Office of the Vice Provost for Research a brief report to verify progress on the proposed timeline.

Final report: By **Friday, August 30, 2019**, grant recipients must provide to the Office of the Vice Provost for Research a summary report of no longer than five single-spaced pages accompanied by other relevant products or evidence of the completion of the funded activity.

The final report must:

- describe the work that was accomplished;
- describe the outcomes/impact of the collaboration;
- describe any plans for ongoing collaboration beyond the funded project;
- provide a final accounting of budget expenses;
- identify specific proposal(s) submitted to external sponsor(s) as a result of the grant (if applicable); and
- describe any significant deviation from or extensions to the project described in the original proposal, if applicable.

All reports should be submitted to collaborates@tufts.edu.

If the interim progress report and/or the final summary report are not submitted on time, the PI may be ineligible to receive future provost office seed funding.

Procedure for Submitting Proposals

Proposals must be submitted electronically to collaborates@tufts.edu no later than **11:59 pm on Friday, January 12, 2018**.

Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. Use standard paper size (8 ½" x 11) and at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins.

All proposals must include the following sections as a single, electronic document (PDF or Word) in the indicated order, and the Budget Form must also be included as a separate writable Excel file:

1. **Seed Grant Submission Form.** All sections must be completed, and signature of the appropriate dean must be included on the form at the time of submission.
2. **Proposal Description** (no more than two single-spaced pages). Describe the proposed collaborative project including goals, activities or experiments, expected outcomes, and a timeline for completion. The proposal must designate a lead principal investigator, who must be a Tufts faculty member with a primary appointment at a University school or unit.
3. **Additional Proposal Information** (no more than one single-spaced page). This section is to be used to describe how the project will lead to the potential for the multidisciplinary team to develop new scholarship/research or further collaboration, including but not limited to an assessment of the potential for subsequent external funding, if applicable (e.g. how the work relates to a funding agency's mission statement). The section can also be used to describe in more detail methodologies; endpoint assessment methods (e.g. statistical analyses); description of collaborative team and each member's contribution; and additional expected outcomes related to the project (e.g. intellectual property).
4. **Proposal Budget and Budget Justification.** The **Budget Form** must be used to prepare the project's proposed budget. Budgets should only indicate those costs that are absolutely necessary to carry out the project. The budget, along with a separate narrative budget justification, must address the following:
 - a. details explaining the necessity of each budget item;
 - b. the method used to develop the cost estimations;
 - c. description of each person's role in the project, percentage of effort, and estimated costs;
 - d. a list of any in-kind (no cost to the grant) contributions from Tufts central services and any other school or department (e.g. salaries and supplies); and
 - e. any previous funding provided by the Office of the Provost for this project or related projects.
5. **Resumes.** Include an **abbreviated** CV or resume of **no more than two pages** in length for each collaborator.
6. **References/Bibliography.** A short (no more than one page) list of relevant publications from each collaborator may be included, but is not required. Publications directly related to the project may also be listed here.

Proposals that do not include these sections in the above order and are not submitted as a single electronic file with an additional copy of the Budget Form in Excel format will not be accepted.

The deadline for proposal submission is

11:59 pm

Friday, January 12, 2018

**Notification of awards will be made no
later than May 1, 2018.**

**For questions and submission of a
proposal, please email
collaborates@tufts.edu.**

Proposal Checklist

- Seed Grant Submission Form
- Proposal Description
- Additional Proposal Information
- Budget Form
- Budget Justification
- Resumes
- References/Bibliography
- Budget Form included as a separate writable Excel file