

Request for Proposals (RFP)
2023 Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact ORIEI
Building the Foundation – Early Stage Research Seed Funding

The goal of the ORIEI *Building the Foundation – Early Stage Research Seed Funding* is to stimulate the development of new research and scholarship initiatives through the support of projects that have a high probability of attracting new external funding. Topics that will build the applicant’s capacity to compete for major funding initiatives available now or anticipated from government or non-government organizations or that will exploit technologies available in Mason’s core facilities (e.g., MRI, Nanofabrication Facility, Visualization Lab, BRL, Center for the Arts, etc.) are encouraged.

Faculty and teams are encouraged to submit proposals for up to one-year of funding, up to \$50,000. We expect to fund six (6) projects.

The awarded seed grants will provide catalytic funding to pilot projects that support truly innovative ideas, foster collaboration, strengthen undergraduate and graduate student learning experiences, and afford opportunities for external funding in the future. The seed funding will be awarded to allow the grantee to perform preliminary research and scholarship that improve subsequent award likelihood, award size, or both, of an external funding proposal. Proposals will be considered from individuals or teams. A faculty member can only be an investigator (of any role, PI, co-PI, and etc.) on one (1) proposal. Faculty are not eligible to be awarded consecutive seed grants and PIs cannot submit both an Early Stage Research Funding application and the larger Take It to the Next Level - Multidisciplinary Research Seed Funding opportunity. The Early Stage seed grants are to be used to support the preparation of competitive proposals to be submitted to funding organizations within 18 months of seed grant award initiation. ORIEI will also hold a Q&A (which will be recorded) to discuss and answer questions about both Seed Funding Opportunities on March 8, 2023.

Proposals will be ranked based on their overall quality of project narrative, level of innovation, potential for advancing Mason’s strategic goals, clarity and feasibility of milestones and outcomes, alignment of project to targeted external funding opportunity, and the strength of the proposing PI/team.

Additional details about the proposal requirements and process can be found below.

Key Dates

Call for Proposals Released:	February 20, 2023
Seed Funding Q&A:	March 8, 2023
Proposal Due Date:	March 31, 2023
Funding Decisions:	On or About June 15, 2023

Eligibility/Requirements/Priority Areas

- All faculty currently allowed to submit proposals under Mason’s [Principal Investigators Policy 4012](#). PLEASE NOTE: This funding is for early stage researchers. Priority will be given to early career faculty, restart career faculty and those who have not yet received external funding.
- Projects may address all stages of research and scholarship from basic/fundamental research and scholarship to applied/translational projects.
- Grants are to be used to support the preparation of competitive proposals to be submitted to funding agencies within 18 months of seed grant award initiation.
- **A faculty member may only participate as a member of the proposing team on (1) proposal** in this competition.
- Faculty may **NOT submit a proposal for BOTH the *Building the Foundation – Early Stage Research Seed Funding* and the larger *Take It to the Next Level - Multidisciplinary Research Seed Funding* opportunity.**
- **Faculty are strongly encouraged to speak with their Dean or Associate Dean for Research about their proposal idea.**

Proposal Requirements

Page Limitation:	See Section Requirements below
Margin:	No smaller than half (½) inch margins
Font Size	Font size of no less than 11 point
Line Spacing:	No more than 6 lines per vertical inch

The proposal must include the following sections and follow the page limitations associated with each section:

Cover Page (Up to 1 page)

Title of Proposal

Names and Affiliations of Proposing Team Members [both Mason members and external partner(s)]. For Mason team members, include the Department and College/School

Brief Project Summary (Maximum 300 words)

Briefly describe the project for which you are applying for funding. Please provide the rationale for this project, making sure to speak to the questions and/or issues that the project will address, its novelty, and current limitations. Articulate how/why this funding will be used/is needed to increase the likelihood of success for a subsequent external funding opportunity (include the name of the funding opportunity and due date).

Proposal Narrative (Maximum 4 pages)

Provide a technical description of the preliminary research/scholarship including approach and expected outcomes. Describe how you will engage student researchers and scholars during the proposed seed and externally funded activities. Figures are included in the page count. *References are not included in page count and can be placed after the Proposal Narrative.* Include how the preliminary project is aligned with the targeted external funding opportunity (this is a key element of award consideration).

If applicable, describe current or prior collaborations among team members or how this funding will enhance new collaborations (Maximum 250 words)

Proposal Budget and Budget Justification (Outside the 4 page limit)

Provide an itemized proposal budget spreadsheet and budget justification

Biographical Sketches for PIs and Senior Personnel (up to 2 pages per person in any format)

Submission

Applications must be submitted **as one complete PDF document** by 11:59 pm EST on March 31, 2023 to resdev@gmu.edu.

Post Award

- Applicants will be required to submit brief Mid-Project and Final Report based on the template provided by ORIEI. The Mid-Project Report will include a meeting with the ORIEI team (Rebekah Hersch and/or Andre Marshall or their designate) where your project progress and opportunities for sponsored research/scholarship will be discussed and evaluated.
- It is expected that the projects will generate the outcomes leading to strong proposals for the targeted sponsored opportunity. Failure to submit a proposal for follow on external sponsored research/scholarship may preclude the applicant from receiving subsequent seed funding.
- To further support Mason investigators, a pre-submission of the target external follow-on funding proposal will be required. A 'Blue Team' will review the pre-submission providing feedback to PIs to further strengthen proposals before final submission to prospective external sponsors.

Review Process and Criteria

An anonymous review process by an external panel of experts will down-select to a short-list of the most promising proposals. These proposals will be recommended for funding to the ORIEI Review Team.

Reviewers will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

- ***Overall quality of the project proposed***
- ***Clarity, feasibility and promise of proposed project goals and outcomes***
- ***Alignment of the proposed project to the targeted external funding opportunity; extent to which proposed project provided the necessary preliminary data to increase external funding likelihood***
- ***Experience and expertise of project team***

Please direct questions to resdev@gmu.edu or to Rebekah Hersch at 703-993-5940.