



PRESIDENT'S RESEARCH FUND (PRF) SERC APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Deadline: February 1, 2025 5:00 P.M. CST

To be submitted via OpenWater

Questions regarding these guidelines may be directed to Christine Luebbert, MHA, Office of the Vice President for Research, at (314) 977-9356, Email: christine.luebbert@slu.edu

PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES OF THE FUND

The President's Research Fund (PRF) supports promising projects that have strong potential to attract external funding. These funds have been made available since 2009 to support research and scholarly activity. PRF awards are aimed at supporting the collection of data or other pilot activities that the awardee will use as the basis for extramural grant or contract applications.

The PRF funds can be used for seed funding for a project, bridge funding, or development of a new collaboration or area of research.

DEADLINE

Applications must be received by February 1, 2025 at 5:00 P.M. CST, via the OpenWater portal. Log in to myslu.slu.edu and click on the OpenWater icon in the 'My Apps' tab. Log-in with your current SLU email address (i.e., first.last@slu.edu) and your password. The first time you log in, you will be asked to set up your profile.

AWARD DETAILS

Eligibility

Eligibility is based on the disciplinary content of the project, rather than the appointment of the scholar or researcher(s). Research projects in all disciplines represented by the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC) will be considered for funding. PIs must also meet the following criteria:

- Full-time faculty members
- Collaborative projects refer to faculty representation from two or more colleges, schools, and/or units.
- One application per PI is allowed for this opportunity. PIs may also apply to other SLU internal annual project-based research awards (i.e., Beaumont, Health Research Grants). However, only one award may be accepted in any annual cycle.
- Be in good standing with their reporting of internal awards to be eligible to submit a new PRF proposal. Submitters should ensure that they have no outstanding or incomplete reports for any existing or previous internal funding prior to submission.
- Submitters should not re-submit a previously rejected PRF proposal without substantive modification. PIs are encouraged to submit revised proposals that incorporate feedback from prior reviews, but any proposals that are evaluated by the Science and Engineering Research Council as not materially different from a prior rejected application will be returned without review.

Award Amounts

Category 1: Up to \$25,000

Category 2: Up to \$50,000, Cross-disciplinary collaborative projects
Applications that cross very distinct disciplines within the same school/college may be considered.

Awards are based on a competitive review considering the merits of the specific activities proposed, relative ranking among other applications, and availability of funds.

Performance Period

- **Support will be for the period from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.**
- No-cost extensions (NCEs) will only be permitted under exceptional circumstances, with request for such extensions being reviewed by OVPR and the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC) Council. NCE requests must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the end of the performance period.

APPLICATION FORMAT

Applications should be submitted via the OpenWater portal. Log in to myslu.slu.edu and click on the OpenWater icon in the 'My Apps' tab. You can log in using your current SLU email address i.e., first.last@slu.edu) and your password. The first time you log in, you will be asked to set up your profile.

1. LAY ABSTRACT – 350-word limit. Written for a general audience.

2. RESUBMISSIONS ONLY (1-page limit) Revised applications must include a one-page description of how weaknesses noted in previous review cycles have been addressed.

3. RESEARCH PROPOSAL – 3-page limit. Please use sub-headings to delineate sections.

- Specific Aims
- Research Plan
- Significance and Impact of Research
- For collaborative projects, include the role of each collaborator

4. REFERENCE CITATIONS LIST – No page limit.

5. EXTERNAL FUNDING PLAN – 500-word limit.

Detail the plans for external funding and how the requested funding will enhance the likelihood of external funding.

6. BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION – 500-word limit.

Include a detailed, itemized budget. Provide a clear narrative description of how funds in each category will be used.

7. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- **Biosketches** – Provide a current NIH or NSF formatted biosketch.
- **Current Research Funding** – Include a detailed description of your current and pending funding, including amounts, dates, and outcomes. Please provide a clear narrative for how this project fits into your overall research agenda.

8. RECOMMENDED REVIEWERS (Mandatory)

Provide a list of three experts at SLU who the submitter believes are qualified to review the proposal. Please confirm with the individuals that they are willing to serve as a reviewer.

BUDGETING GUIDELINES

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Research Expenses

Expenses that are essential to the proposed project are allowed. Materials, supplies, and other expenses requested from the President's Research Fund must directly relate to the proposed project and be justified in that context. Budget items will be reviewed and may be adjusted or removed.

Salary and Fringe Benefits for SLU Faculty and Staff

- Salary is allowed for non-key personnel and will be subject to tax and fringe adjustments.
- Summer salary is allowed for senior/key personnel on 9-month contracts and will be subject to tax and fringe adjustments. Summer salary may not exceed 20% of the total budget.

Student Labor

A student (undergraduate or graduate) is eligible to work on a PRF-sponsored project only if ALL of the following criteria are met:

- Holds student status at SLU for the duration of the project
- Is in good academic standing
- Complies with the guidelines for any other funded positions, for example, students who hold GA positions must be compliant with their GA policy.

Payees outside the University - Subcontractors, Service Providers, and Consultants

Applicants must itemize all proposed Subcontractors, Service Providers, and Consultants as separate line items in the budget, and provide a convincing justification for their inclusion on the project, explaining clearly and thoroughly why the proposed work cannot be done at SLU.

Peer reviewers are asked to give their opinion of costs as proposed in the application. PIs are therefore advised to provide sufficient detail in their budget justification such that this determination can be made.

UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The following are ineligible for support from the PRF and should not be included in proposals to the Fund:

- Indirect Costs
- Pre-award costs, i.e., any expenses incurred prior to official start date of the PRF award
- Tuition or fees
- Salary of Key Personnel with 12-month contracts

REVIEW PROCESS

Awards are based on a competitive review. Reviewers consider the merits of the specific activities proposed, relative ranking among other applications, and availability of funds. Proposals must demonstrate exceptional merit and value for the field of study, the individual, the department, the college or school, and the research mission of the university.

Upon determination of compliance with guidelines, applications will undergo peer review. Each application will be reviewed by one subject matter expert (ideally one of the reviewers suggested by the applicants), and Science and Engineering Research Council members. Proposals will be given an overall impact score ranging from 1 (exceptional) to 9 (poor), based on the following criteria.

1. **Significance** - Does the future project that follows from the proposed pilot project address an important research issue? [For Category 2 Proposals: Does the proposed pilot project meaningfully engage faculty across different academic units and disciplines?]
2. **Investigators** – Are the PI(s) and other researchers well suited to the pilot project?
3. **Innovation** - Does the proposed pilot project address a novel approach or propose new avenues for investigation at SLU?
4. **Approach** – Are the overall strategy (and methodology and analyses where indicated) well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the proposed pilot project that would lead to future grant submissions?
5. **Potential for future external funding** – How does the proposed pilot project increase the likelihood for future funding?

Impact Score	Rating	Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
High		
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong, essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong, negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong, only some minor weaknesses
Medium		
4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also moderate weaknesses
Low		
7	Fair	Some strengths but at least one major weakness
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
9	Poor	Very few strengths, numerous major weaknesses

Minor Weakness: an easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact

Moderate Weakness: a weakness that lessens impact

Major Weakness: a weakness that severely limits impact

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLIANCE

Projects including the use of human subjects, animals, hazardous materials, etc., must have the appropriate committee approval(s), e.g., Institutional Review Board (IRB), Animal Care Committee, Institutional Biosafety Committee, etc. prior to the start of the project.

In the event that a PRF grant award is made and required approvals are not received prior to the start date, the award may be delayed until approval is received.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF AWARDS

The award will be placed in a designated fund in the administrative PI's name within the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR). PIs are required to oversee and approve all expenditures according to the approved budget. Any remaining funds at the end of the performance period will be retained by the SERC for allocation for future projects.

At the end of one year of performance (June 30, 2026), PIs must submit a report to the research council and OVPR detailing progress and research products related to the received funding. In addition, recipients are required to complete brief annual reports to the research council and OVPR that document any external funding, publications, or presentations directly related to the support received from this award for three (3) years following the project end date. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may impact consideration for future internal funding opportunities.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. If I am PI/Co-PI on an application, can I submit more than one application as a PI/Co- PI?**

No. You may submit only one application as a PI or Co-PI per submission period.

- 2. I am a collaborator on another PRF application. May I also submit an application as PI?** Yes, but it must be for a completely different project, i.e., with different aims, goals, and objectives.

- 3. I am looking for funding for a student's dissertation research. Is the PRF an appropriate source?**

No. The PRF is intended to stimulate faculty research in innovative areas that are difficult to fund but will lead to external funding.