



2017-2018 **SPARC** Graduate Research Grant

Grant Administration Guidelines

Basic Account Information

The Office of Research is working with your advisor's college or school business manager to establish an account transfer. Your department business manager may need to contact the college or school business manager for account information. All of the money awarded will be in a general account, and the unit is responsible for the management and disbursement of funds.

- Your first point of contact will be the Business Manager for your Advisor's college or school. The Business Manager may designate a contact for processing of your expenditures (such as hiring, travel approval, reimbursement for supplies, and purchasing, etc.).
- No account information is sent to the student or faculty member.
- No account information is available through USCeRA.
- You cannot retroactively pay for any materials, travel, or work that has already taken place.
- SPARC Graduate Research Grant awards are processed as "E" funds. All expenditures must remain compliant with E fund procurement requirements.
- If your project required human or animal subject approval, you must email the IRB or IACUC approval letter to Lauren Clark (lauren.clark@sc.edu) prior to starting the project.
- Accounting of your expenditures may be requested by the Office of Research at any point during the project period or after completion of the project.
- Unused funds (greater than \$100) revert back to the Office of Research at the end of the project period or after the student has graduated.

Account Setup, Account Numbers and Account Balance

Your advisor's department business manager is your first point of contact for account questions. If the account information is not available to the department business manager, then the business manager of your academic unit (college or school) should be contacted.

Timeline

Funds will be transferred to the academic units by April 2018. Funds cannot be spent until May 1, 2018. Funds should be expended between May 1, 2018 and July 31, 2019. Contact Lauren Clark (lauren.clark@sc.edu or 777-3929) if you have problems or questions.

Accessing and Expending the Funds

Your advisor must authorize all expenditures. Pre-approval paperwork is required for almost everything (this can take weeks, so plan ahead). Travel Authorizations (TAs) must be completed and approved before travel can occur (start this at least one month prior to departure). Reimbursements for travel or purchases require original receipts. Your proposal budget is the basis for how your money should be spent.

Project Period – when the funds can be used

The funds can be used between May 1, 2018 and July 31, 2019. **Funds cannot be applied retroactively for expenses incurred prior to May 1, 2018.** Please contact Lauren Clark as soon as possible if you need to purchase plane tickets for summer 2017 travel (lauren.clark@sc.edu or 777-3929).

Under exceptional circumstances, an extension may be granted. Requests for extensions must be made in writing at least 30 days prior to the project end date. The student should email the extension request (with advisor copied) to Lauren Clark (lauren.clark@sc.edu). The extension request should include the reason for the request and the requested end date.

Budget Changes

For various reasons, it is sometimes necessary to make changes to your budget (supplies cost more or less than anticipated, flight costs have risen or fallen, need to attend a different conference, etc.). Once your account is set-up, all changes are between you and your Advisor; please note that any changes must adhere to the SPARC guidelines for allowable and unallowable costs. You do not need to contact the Office of Research for permission or with a revised budget. Your business manager may require that you document the change in writing with your Advisor's signature, but that will vary by department.

Salary

USC Graduate School Policies Regarding Summer Hiring of Graduate Students

If you are requesting summer salary from the SPARC Graduate Research Grant, be advised that there may be two possibilities for employment:

1. **Graduate Research Assistant**

The Graduate Research Assistant option offers a lower fringe benefits rate but requires enrollment of 3 credit hours for the summer (VIP Code 51353). An exception to the 3 credit hour enrollment is students who have been granted Special Enrollment Status (formerly known as Z Status). These students are required to enroll in one credit hour for the summer if paid as a Graduate Research Assistant.

2. **Temporary Worker** – This option allows students to be hired by their program or department with paperwork filed through the university's Office of Human Resources. The fringe benefit rate is higher for Temporary Workers, but there is no summer enrollment requirement (HR Code 51410).

For the most up-to-date policy information on graduate student hiring, please see the [Processes for Graduate Student Funding](#) on The Graduate School website.

Travel

These procedures apply to all types of SPARC-funded travel:

- Before you go to the department administrator, compile estimates of the cost for your travel, including plane or mileage, lodging, local transportation (taxis/shuttles), registration (if applicable), etc. Also bring purpose of and dates of travel.
- You will need to work with your department administrator. Your Advisor likely has experience with the travel process too. Take your account number with you.
- You must have a Travel Authorization form (called a TA) completed and submitted BEFORE each and every trip you take - this must be done at least a few days before you go (the earlier the better). A TA must be completed before you can purchase a plane ticket.

- Generally pre-paid items (flight) can be reimbursed right away - but this is up to your department, so ask your department business manager. Once you have a TA, it is also possible to purchase a plane ticket directly through USC-approved travel agencies and to charge your grant directly – discuss with your departmental business manager.
- You must save ALL receipts while you are traveling. If you do not have receipts, you will not be reimbursed for your expenses.
- When you return, a Travel Reimbursement Voucher (TRV) must be completed, and you must provide all of your receipts, give your mileage, etc. Talk about this with the person in the department who is helping you before you leave.
- FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL: All students going abroad (including conference travel) through USC-sponsored programs (including SPARC) must submit an application to the Study Abroad Office for approval. This includes travel to Canada and Mexico. You must complete this process in order to be in compliance with the University of South Carolina’s policy regarding students that are studying, researching, or participating in conferences abroad. Students must follow the procedures outlined by the USC Study Abroad Office in accordance with university policy.

Materials and Supplies

All purchases must be approved by your Advisor. There are 3 ways that items can be purchased:

- 1) on a University purchasing card (credit card)
- 2) directly from the account through the university purchase requisition process
- 3) purchasing item(s) yourself (or Advisor) and reimbursement through a Direct Expenditure Voucher (DEV)

These options should be discussed with your Advisor and/or the business manager **prior to** making a purchase.

SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS OR YOU WILL NOT BE REIMBURSED.

All materials/supplies that are not expended during the project are USC property and must be returned to your Advisor or the Office of Research.

Additional Requirements

- 1) Presentation of your research or creative project at Discover USC in the Spring of 2019. For more info: www.sc.edu/DiscoverUSC
- 2) Participation in yearly online surveys, which will allow the Office of Research to track your progress and document any publications, presentation or awards for three years following the receipt of the SPARC Graduate Research Grant.
- 3) Acknowledge support from the SPARC Graduate Research Grant and the USC Office of the Vice President for Research in all presentations and publications related to your research or creative project.
- 4) Submit a one page document describing your completed research project, as well as an explanation of how the SPARC funding enhanced your graduate research/creative experience. In addition, a minimum of two photographs are requested which should include a headshot of yourself and a photo of you working on your creative or research project which may be used to promote the SPARC Program. These items will be submitted to Lauren Clark at lauren.clark@sc.edu after the completion of your project or prior to graduation.

Contacts for Questions

Lauren Clark in the Office of Research is available to help answer any questions (803-777-3929 or lauren.clark@sc.edu), but generally you will be referred to one of the following numbers:

Human or animal subjects (IRB or IACUC questions) – Office of Research Compliance 803-777-7095

Salary (Payroll): 803-777-4227

Purchasing: 803-777-4115

Travel: 803-777-2602 (this is the main Controller’s Office number, ask for Travel)

SPARC Graduate Research Grant:

Summary of Allowable and Unallowable Costs, Restrictions on Travel

From the 2017-2018 SPARC Graduate Research Grant Application Guidelines

http://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/research/internal_funding_awards/students/sparc/

Allowable Costs

- Student Salary and fringe benefits
- Temporary Help Salary and fringe benefits
- Transcriptionist Fees (these are considered pay for service and no fringe benefits required)
- Project supplies, materials and/or equipment
- Sample processing costs
- Animal maintenance costs
- Publication costs
- Satellite phones if mandated for safety and security due to travel in high-risk areas
- Student travel essential to conduct the project (includes transportation, housing, per diem)
- Student travel to present research or creative work at National/International Professional Conference or Exhibition (includes transportation, registration, per diem, housing)
\$500 maximum request for travel within US; \$800 maximum request for international travel
- USC Tuition for Special Enrollment Status students (no other tuition costs are allowed)
For more information on the Graduate School's Special Enrollment Status Policies (formerly known as Z Status), please refer to the following link:
<http://www.gradschool.sc.edu/post.asp?eventid=365>
- Other costs not specified – please ask if you are not sure

Restrictions on Travel Funds

- Students cannot receive conference travel funds from both the SPARC Graduate Research Grant and the Graduate School Travel Grant Program in the same academic year.
- Students may request **EITHER** funds for travel to conduct the research **OR** conference travel funds from the SPARC Graduate Research Fellowship Program – **STUDENTS CANNOT REQUEST BOTH.**
- Students may only request funds for travel to one conference.

Unallowable Costs

- Food
- Compensation for faculty members
- Computers and computer components, cameras, voice recorders, cell phones
- Passport fees, vaccination fees, ID cards, travel visas
- Yearly student health insurance fees
- Incentives to participants abroad
- Salary or payment to individuals abroad
- Purchases made prior to project start date (May 1, 2018)

Departmental Pre-Approval Required

Policies vary by Department – these requests may not be allowed

Participant incentives

These requests are very complex and may not be allowed. To determine if participant incentives are allowable in a certain department, the student must consult with their department business manager. Support is unlikely for non-US citizen/permanent resident participants. **The SPARC Graduate Research Grant program does not allow participant incentives for participants abroad.**