SPARC Graduate Research Grant

Support to Promote Advancement of Research and Creativity

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2020-2021 SPARC Application:
Guidelines for Faculty Mentors
Application Due Date:
Wednesday, October 14, 2020 by 5:00 pm

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Required Documents and Submission in USCeRA

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Faculty mentors serving as the PI on a SPARC grant are responsible for
- signing the Authorship and GPA Certification Form
- writing a one-page letter of recommendation which adheres to the guidelines below
- submitting the SPARC proposal application in USCeRA by the deadline

Faculty mentors may sponsor only two student SPARC applications per year (i.e. only two students per faculty mentor may apply for SPARC each year).

AUTHORSHIP AND GPA CERTIFICATION FORM
By signing this form, you are confirming that the student was the primary author of the proposal and that the the GPA listed on the form is accurate as of the date of submission for the student's current degree program.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE FACULTY LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION
Letters of Recommendation must be written by a current USC faculty member. The SPARC PI is normally the student's primary advisor for their dissertation, but exceptions to this are possible – please see situations requiring additional documentation below. Letters of Recommendation written by former USC faculty members who are no longer employed by the university will not be accepted.

Letters of Recommendation should be no longer than **one page** and should be written on faculty letterhead. Letters which are very general and/or vague are not helpful to the review committee. The review committee has requested that Letters of Recommendation address the bulleted topics listed below. Each proposal should include only one Letter of Recommendation.

- The letter should include the following:
    - How long you have known the student
    - Estimate student's anticipated graduation date
    - Evaluate the student's degree of independence, both generally and specifically in the preparation of this proposal
    - Assess student's intellectual ability, creativity and critical thinking skills
    - Assess feasibility of project completion based on student's degree of preparation and motivation
    - Discuss the significance of this funding for the student's dissertation or thesis, i.e. how would this project impact the student's progress towards degree completion
    - Any other information that the committee should be aware of

- Please give **one** of the following overall ratings of the student for a SPARC Graduate Research Grant
    Very Strongly Recommend
    Recommend with Confidence
    Recommend with Reservations
    Do Not Recommend

- Save as PDF or MS Word file and append to the end of student's proposal; save entire proposal package as **one** PDF or Word document

Faculty Advisors must provide additional documentation in the Letter of Recommendation for the following situations:

❖ **Student's Primary Advisor is not the SPARC PI**
The Faculty Advisor on the proposal should be the student's Primary Advisor for their dissertation or thesis. If a student wishes to have a USC faculty member other than their Primary Advisor as the Faculty Advisor (and PI in USCeRA) for this grant, then the student must submit a letter of support from their Primary Advisor stating their approval for another faculty member to serve as the Faculty Advisor for the Fellowship. Alternatively, the student's dissertation or thesis committee may approve the appointment of a USC faculty member who is not the Primary Advisor as the Faculty Advisor for this grant. In this case, the student must produce a letter of support from the Chair of the Dissertation or Thesis Committee stating the committee's approval for a faculty member other than the Primary Advisor to serve as Faculty Advisor (and PI in USCeRA) for this grant. When submitting the SPARC Graduate Research Grant proposal, this letter of support should be appended to the proposal and should appear after the Faculty Letter of Recommendation.

❖ **Student Requests Funds to Attend a Short Course**
The student may request funds to cover the expenses related to a virtual short course; HOWEVER, the Faculty Advisor must state in the Letter of Recommendation that the course is essential to the student's research and that the course will help advance the PhD dissertation.

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SUBMITTING THE SPARC PROPOSAL IN USCeRA:

- **Faculty Advisor writes one-page Letter of Recommendation.**
- **Attach the completed Faculty Letter of Recommendation to the end of student's proposal**.

  ➤ This should create **ONE document (PDF or MS Word)** containing the following documents **in this order:**
     i. Resubmission narrative (only if resubmitting)
     ii. Reviewer comments from previous submission (only if resubmitting)
     iii. Proposal Narrative (if not a resubmission, the narrative is the first part of the package)
     iv. Bibliography
     v. Budget Form
     vi. Current and Pending Support Form
     vii. Biographical Sketch
     viii. Authorship and GPA Certification Form
     ix. Letter of Support for Participant Incentives (required if requesting participant incentives)
     x. Optional Letter of Support from another lab, faculty member, collaborators, etc.
     xi. Letter of Recommendation from faculty advisor (required for all proposals)
     xii. IF USC FACULTY MEMBER OTHER THAN STUDENT'S PRIMARY ADVISOR IS ACTING AS FACULTY ADVISOR FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE SPARC GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT, a Letter of Support from the student's primary Advisor or the Chair of the Thesis/Dissertation Committee must follow the Faculty Letter of Recommendation.

  ➤ **This document should be named: Student last name_first initial (example: Smith_J)**

  ➤ **Please do not scan the entire proposal. Proposals may be submitted as MS Word or PDF documents.**

  ➤ **If you cannot combine documents, please contact Lauren Clark at lauren.clark@sc.edu for help.**

Login in to USCeRA (https://sam.research.sc.edu/uscera/).
Use your university username and password to log into USCeRA.

1) Create New Proposal - USCeRA Proposal / Award Processing Form (PAP)
- On the top of the top of main USCeRA page, in the garnet area, select "Proposals"
- From the dropdown menu, click on "+Create New Proposal." This will take you to the "Create New Proposal" page
- Complete the fields as follows (this will become part of the Proposal Summary):

Basic Information

1. **Title:** <mark>Proposal title in USCeRA must follow this format:</mark>

   Title format: <mark>SPARC: Student Name: Proposal Title (**Please <u>do not</u> write the title in all caps.)**</mark>

   <mark>Example: SPARC: Sue Smith: Nutrient Cycling in Charleston Harbor</mark>

   The title in USCeRA must follow this format exactly so that proposals can be found and sorted in USCeRA based on the student's name and association with SPARC.

2. **Primary Awardee Department**: should fill automatically with your department; please email Lauren Clark if there is a problem lauren.clark@sc.edu
   Please note that the SPARC funds follow the faculty mentor's home department in USCeRA. If a faculty member has a dual appointment, they can edit the "Primary Awardee Department" dropdown on the PAP (Proposal Award Processing) Form in USCeRA and choose the appropriate department.

3. **Type**: Select New (if a new proposal) or Revision (if the proposal was previously submitted to the SPARC Program has been revised for this round)

4. **Grants.gov Workspace ID**: leave this blank

5. **Start Date**: May 1, 2021

6. **End Date**: July 31, 2022

7. **Agency deadline**: *October 14, 2020; enter due date and* select – *Receipt*

   <mark>Click on the green "Continue" button</mark>

- New Proposal: "SPARC: Student name: Title of proposal" is now at top of page
  Project Source and Sponsor

Source of Project and Sponsor

1. **Is this an internal Request?**
   Select "Yes"

2. **Internal Request Office**
   Select Vice President for Research

3. **Internal Request Type**
   Select SPARC Graduate Research Grant

   Sponsor information should automatically populate the form

   <mark>Click on the green "Continue" button</mark>

Personnel

+Add Personnel: leave blank unless there are USC faculty/staff who will be collaborating on this project (do not add the student's name here – this information is added in the + Add Student section)

SPARC Graduate Research Grant Students
+Add Student: enter student first name, last name, email address and department
Click green "Continue" button
Enter the student's university email address - this is the email address used to send reviewer comments to the student.

Click green "Continue" button

Verify that the student information entered is correct.

Click green "Continue" button

$Costs

Project Costs

1. **Amount Requested for First or Current Year**
Enter the amount requested, up to $5000. Do not enter a number higher than $5000 or the proposal will be disapproved.

2. **Project Years**
Enter "1"

3. **Total Amount Requested for All Project Years**
Enter the amount requested, up to $5000. Do not enter a number higher than $5000 or the proposal will be disapproved.

Click green "Continue" button

? Questions

General Questions
Questions: *Answer yes/no as appropriate - you must answer all questions.*

Click green "Continue" button

EXCEPTIONS: *See below for Cost Share, Human Subjects or Vertebrate Animal Usage*

Cost Share in Proposal (i.e. matching funds)? Select No.

Matching funds are not allowed.

Human Subjects? If TRUE, select YES *(approval is not required for submission)*

Select YES even if you do not yet have IRB approval if you will need to obtain.

An Approval # text box will appear. If you have a number already for this project, enter the number. If you do not have a number but will apply for approval, write "pending"

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*Vertebrate animals? **If TRUE, select YES** (approval is not required for submission)*

Select Yes even if you do not yet have Animal Use Approval if you will need to obtain.

An Approval # text box will appear. If you have a number already for this project, enter the number and Approval Date is prompted. If you do not have a number but will apply for approval, write "pending". Leave Approval Date blank if pending.

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Internal Commit Form

NOTE: This form indicates a proposal is REQUESTING funds from USC (an internal funding source), which includes the SPARC Graduate Research Grant program. It does NOT indicate a need for cost-sharing from your department or college.

Open form by clicking on **Internal Commit** on the Proposal Summary page

In the text box beside **Year 1**, enter the total amount requested for the SPARC Grant award (max of $5000). Do not enter a number higher than $5000 or the proposal will be disapproved.

All other squares and boxes should be blank. Total will auto-fill.

Scroll to the bottom of the page and click <SAVE>.

This will bring you back to the "Proposal Summary" page and the Internal Commit form under My Forms will now have a status of ✓**Complete**.

2) Complete and save all forms listed in the "All Forms" box

Once you have successfully saved the PAP form, you will be brought to a "Proposal Summary" page with several sections (*see screen capture below*).

Under the box/section entitled "My Forms," you will see your forms listed in red. Forms will include:

- Proposal/Award Processing (PAP)
- Internal Commit
- Please note that the Administrative Information form will auto-fill and should only be visible to administrators. If the Administrative Information form says "Incomplete", click on the form and select "no" for the question regarding if the submission is for a R01 grant.

Every form listed must be opened, completed, and saved or your proposal will not be complete.

Each form must show a status of ✓**Complete** before the proposal can be submitted.

My Forms

Administrative Information	✔ Complete
USC/SCRF	
USC	
Grant/Contract	
Grant	

Proposal/Award Processing Form (PAP) **View Report >**	✔ Complete 🖶

Internal Commit	✔ Complete 🖶

Open, complete and save all forms until status of each is "Completed."

3) "Upload" the SPARC Graduate Research Grant proposal

NOTE: **please submit as ONE word or PDF document**. Do not scan. Do not submit separate files. Please contact me (Lauren Clark) if you are having any problems (777-3929).

a. On the right side of the "Proposal Summary" page, there is an "Uploaded Documents" section (to the right of "All Forms")

b. Click on "🎧Upload Document". This will bring you to a new page.

c. **Under "Category," select "Other."** This allows you to upload the SPARC proposal as one document (please do not upload several separate documents).

d. Under "New Upload," Click on "Choose File." This will open a pop-up.

e. In the pop-up box, select the student's proposal from where it is saved in your computer or USB drive.

f. Click on "Open."

g. The name of the student's file will appear to the right of "Choose File."

h. Click on the red "Upload" button.

i. This should take you back to the Proposal Summary page and the file will now be listed under "Uploaded Documents".

Lead PI

👤 Dr. Lauren Clark `Current & Pending`
Office Research - General

Students

Amy Jones
Biological Sciences

Tools

🕄 Audit Trail

➕ Add Note

✖ Delete This Proposal

❶ Post Sponsor Revision

🖶 Print Cover Page

Uploaded Documents

Jones_A.pdf   ✖ Delete
Other   30.6 KB
Dr. Lauren Clark   08/19/2020

❶ For external proposal submissions please upload the following documents, as well as any other necessary support documents:
- Proposal/Proposal Summary
- Budget/Budget Justification

⊕ Upload Document

NOTE: if this takes longer than a minute – something is wrong, try again or call me (777-3929). I will ask you to email the proposal to me at lauren.clark@sc.edu and I will upload it for you.

4) Start the approval process:

At this point, everything should be ready: all forms should show "completed" under the "All forms" box and the student's proposal file should show under "Uploads."

Title

"SPARC: Jane Smith: Seasonal Nutrient Cycling in Charleston Harbor, SC"

Project	Lead PI	Tools
Status `Not Submitted` **Type** New **Dates** 05/01/2021 - 07/31/2022 **Awardee Department** Biological Sciences **Internal Request Type** SPARC Graduate Research Grant	👤 Dr. Lauren Clark `Current & Pending` Office Research - General	↺ Audit Trail ✚ Add Note ✖ Delete This Proposal ❶ Post Sponsor Revision 🖶 Print Cover Page

▶ Start Approval Process

My Forms

Administrative Information	✔ Complete
USC/SCRF USC **Grant/Contract** Grant	
Proposal/Award Processing Form (PAP) `View Report ❯`	✔ Complete 🖶
Internal Commit	✔ Complete 🖶

Students

Amy Jones
Biological Sciences

Uploaded Documents

Jones_A.pdf   `✖ Delete`
Other   30.6 KB
Dr. Lauren Clark   08/19/2020

ℹ For external proposal submissions please upload the following documents, as well as any other necessary support documents:
- Proposal/Proposal Summary
- Budget/Budget Justification

❶ Upload Document

Select the red "Start Approval Process" button above the "My Forms" box.

- A Confirm Proposal Submission pop-up will appear that says "Are you sure…"

- Click on "Submit Proposal."

- You will receive a message at the top of your USCeRA main page stating that the proposal has been successfully submitted with a **proposal number** listed.

Please note that the 5pm requirement on the deadline date is for submission of the completed application/proposal INTO USCeRA (=*clicking on the "Start approval process" button*).

Electronic signatures from the Chair and Dean can occur later, and they are notified automatically by the system of pending applications.

If you do not receive a proposal number from USCeRA, please call Lauren Clark at 777-3929.