

**Guidelines for  
Central Research Committee (CRC) and  
Excellence in Academic Medicine (EAM) Funding**  
(Revised on February 26, 2010)

## **Mechanisms and purpose of funding**

### **CRC funding**

The goal of the CRC program is to assist faculty in generating preliminary data that can be used to support applications for extramural funding. Collaborations that are interdisciplinary or bridge departments or campuses are viewed as strengths of applications. CRC awards are available to SIUSOM faculty at both the Springfield and Carbondale campuses through the office of the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs (ADRFA) and are evaluated for funding by the CRC. There are two CRC funding mechanisms: CRC Regular funding (see Section A) and CRC Near-Miss funding (see Section B). The regular CRC funding is intended to develop grant-writing skills, and hence the competitiveness of faculty who are not highly experienced at writing grant proposals. New and clinical investigators can submit their applications in advance of the regular application date and receive a critique that can be used to refine and improve the final application. The CRC Near-Miss funding is available annually to those who have applied for external funding but were not funded. For this program, a subcommittee of externally funded faculty reviews all applications and ranks proposals based on the likelihood that the recipient will use the funds to generate preliminary data sufficient to address concerns raised in the critique. The ADRFA uses those rankings to determine allocation of funds.

### **EAM funding**

The goal of the EAM program is to assist faculty members in the School of Medicine to improve their success at obtaining research funding from NIH. EAM awards are available to faculty at both Springfield and Carbondale campuses through the office of the ADRFA. The EAM program uses two mechanisms for awarding research funds. One mechanism is an open call for applications (EAM Regular funding, see Section C). These applications are evaluated and scored by the CRC according to NIH standards of review. The second mechanism is a bi-annual call for applications that were submitted to NIH but not funded (EAM Near-Miss funding, see Section D). For this program, a subcommittee of NIH-funded faculty reviews all applications and ranks proposals based on the likelihood that the recipient will use the funds to generate preliminary data sufficient to address concerns raised in the NIH critique. The ADRFA uses those rankings to determine allocation of funds.

## **I. Regular CRC funding**

### **A. Eligibility**

#### *General Guidelines:*

1. School of Medicine faculty at both the Springfield and Carbondale campuses are eligible to be principal investigators on CRC grants. A faculty member must be at the assistant professor level (including Research Assistant Professor but excluding

Lecturer and Instructor) or above and hold a terminal degree appropriate for their area of expertise. Principal investigators must have at least a 51 percent appointment in the Medical School to be eligible for CRC funding. Others associated with the School of Medicine, including but not limited to graduate students, research associates, post-doctoral fellows, visiting faculty, medical students, residents, medical fellows and technicians, are ineligible.

2. During any one grant cycle, a faculty member may act as principal investigator on only one grant. A faculty member may be a co-investigator on any number of grants.
3. An investigator may apply for funding for a new project or for continuation or extension of a funded CRC project. CRC funds are not awarded to supplement ongoing, externally funded research projects.
4. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible to submit CRC applications. An unestablished investigator is one who has not been principal investigator on an external grant (pharmaceutical-sponsored research is not considered an external grant for the purposes of this definition); and/or who has received less than three years of CRC support, whichever comes first; and/or who has had less than five years of research experience after completion of formal or postdoctoral training.

*Established Investigator Guidelines:*

1. Established investigators with total external funding of \$75,000 or more (direct costs only) will be considered ineligible to apply for a CRC award unless they can demonstrate that the external funding available during the fiscal year of requested CRC support is unrelated to the CRC application.
2. Established investigators are eligible to receive CRC support for a total of two years out of any four-year period.
3. Established investigators can submit one application for two years of funding on the same project. However, the Specific Aims of the proposal should reflect only one year of funding, with a brief overview for an additional year included to illustrate future plans. To request a second year of funding, the investigator must submit (i) an "Annual Progress Report" that must document the specific progress made toward the aims of the funded proposal, and (ii) a new grant proposal that will be evaluated together with other new grant proposals. In addition, the request for a second year of support must be accompanied by documentation of an application submitted to an external funding agency. Disbursement of funds for the second year of support will be based on progress, merit, and availability of funds. Funds will be distributed as determined by ADRFA based on the recommendations of the Allocation Subcommittee.

*Unestablished Investigator Guidelines:*

1. Unestablished investigators in their first academic appointment may apply for a total of three years of CRC support on the same project. The "two-years out of any four-years" rule in Section A2(B) will not apply to the new investigators. However, Specific Aims on the proposal should reflect only one year of funding. A brief overview for additional years can be included to illustrate future plans.
2. Funding for the second and third years will be contingent upon submission of a new application that contains a description of progress made toward the aims outlined in the original application. To be considered for a third year of CRC support, the investigator must submit, along with the Annual Progress Report, evidence of having

submitted an application as principal investigator to an external national funding agency.

3. If an investigator receives a CRC grant as an unestablished investigator and, subsequently receives an external award for a project unrelated to the CRC-supported project, the investigator will continue to be considered an unestablished investigator for the purposes of the second year of CRC support.

## **B. Guidelines for Financial Support**

1. The Central Research Committee will consider only those applications requesting between \$1,500 and \$15,000. Requests of less than \$1,500 should be presented first to the appropriate department chairman, and secondarily to the Associate Dean for Research. The Associate Dean for Research may refer such proposals to the CRC for review. Individuals excluded by CRC guidelines from submitting a CRC application can explore other research opportunities and options with the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs.
2. Depending on the project, salaries for personnel can be considered an appropriate use of CRC funds. For example, in recognition of special needs, such as data entry in the behavioral sciences and clinical outcome studies, dollars can be allocated through the CRC for part-time personnel. New personnel requests must be well justified. A request to expand an existing researcher position must explain why the research project cannot be accomplished without increased personnel time. CRC funds can be used to pay for graduate student stipends. The request for faculty salary is not allowed under any circumstances.
3. Purchase of commodities is an appropriate use of CRC funds.
4. Requests for equipment must be limited to less than \$2,500. Major items of equipment (i.e., those costing more than \$2,500) are the responsibility of the department in conjunction with the central administration.
5. Using CRC support for contractual services is an appropriate use of CRC funds. However, documentation must be provided to show that the requested service is more appropriate and less expensive relative to performing that portion of the work using SIUSM resources.
6. CRC funds cannot be used to support full-time technicians, travel expenses, publication costs, biomedical illustration costs, computer costs, or purchase of journals. Under some circumstances, funds may be requested for computer equipment and software. Such requests will be considered only if the computer is integral to conducting the study (e.g., data collection in which the computer is attached to a piece of equipment). Documentation of how the computer will be attached and how the software will be used must be provided.
7. The CRC funds are not to be used to support "long-term" ongoing research.
8. The funding period associated with the CRC mechanism cannot be extended. The entire award must be expended by June 30 of each fiscal year.

## **C. Allocation Priorities**

1. The CRC Allocations Group will fund projects based on scientific merit and on the need for and the availability of research funds.
2. NIH Criteria for the Evaluation of Research Applications will apply, as follows:
  - a. **Significance.** Does this study address an important problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?
  - b. **Approach.** Are the conceptual or clinical framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well reasoned, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
  - c. **Innovation.** Is the project original and innovative? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms or clinical practice; address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for this area?
  - d. **Investigators.** Are the investigators appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work? Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the principal investigator and other researchers? Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project (if applicable)?
  - e. **Environment.** Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed studies benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements? Is there evidence of institutional support?
3. Any application that receives a scientific merit score of 3.0 or higher (i.e., 3.0 to 5.0) will not be funded.

#### **D. Submission of Applications**

*CRC proposals must be reviewed for scientific merit and availability of facilities and personnel by the Department Chair or by means of an intradepartmental review process designated by the Chairperson prior to the submission of proposals to the CRC.*

1. First Monday in February  
A special CRC deadline, two months prior to the regularly established CRC deadline, is available to unestablished investigators and clinical investigators submitting either basic science studies or clinical research studies. The comments of three reviewers will be sent to the investigators for their use in revising the application prior to resubmission for the regular deadline for funding (the first Monday in April).
2. First Monday in April  
On the first Monday in April of each year, revised applications from unestablished investigators and investigators with clinical projects and new applications from established investigators will be accepted. Both the revised and the new applications will undergo the regular CRC review process.

## II. CRC Near -Miss funding

### A. Eligibility

1. Both established and unestablished investigators at the both the Springfield and Carbondale campuses are eligible to submit CRC Near-Miss applications. A faculty member must be at the assistant professor level (including Research Assistant Professor but excluding Lecturer and Instructor) or above and hold a terminal degree appropriate for their area of expertise.
2. An applicant must have already submitted the original grant application with a budget of over \$50,000 to an external granting agency and have received critiques at the time of the application for CRC Near-Miss funding. Triaged applications are eligible. The external agency must allow resubmission of a revised application.
3. An application must be submitted within 12 months of the date of the critiques from the external granting agency.

### B. Guidelines for Financial Support

1. A maximum of \$15,000 of budget can be requested from CRC Near-Miss funding.
2. Request of salaries for personnel such as post docs, residents, researchers and graduate students is acceptable. However, CRC Near-Miss funding mechanism will not support faculty salary.
3. Guidelines for B to H under “Guidelines for Financial support” for CRC Regular funding also apply to CRC Near-Miss funding. Faculty funded through this mechanism are required to resubmit the application to the external agency within 12 *months* after receiving the CRC award.

### C. Allocation Priorities

1. The applications will be evaluated and prioritized by members of the Near-Miss Funding Review Committee, which are appointed by Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs. The committee consists of at least three faculty members with active or recent external funding.
2. Funding priority will go to those applications that are most likely to use the funds to successfully address concerns raised in the critiques from the granting agency.
3. The Allocation Committee will consider funding for Regular applications together based on the total available funding for CRC applications. Two Near-Miss applications may be funded per year, assuming the receipt of meritorious applications.
4. The funding decision is final. Resubmission of the same application is not allowed.
5. Faculty who receive through the CRC Near-Miss mechanism must resubmit the application to the external agency within 12 *months* after receiving the CRC award. If the study receives external funding during the year of CRC support, remaining CRC money will revert back to the ADRFA CRC fund. Any publications arising from work supported by CRC funds must acknowledge that support.

#### **D. Submission of Applications for CRC Near-Miss funding**

1. The deadline for submission is the first Monday in May.
2. The following documents in PDF format should be submitted by email to the office of ADRFA: (1) a copy of the original application submitted to an external agency, (2) critiques from the external agency, (3) a cover letter explaining plans to improve the original application in response to the critiques and (4) a budget for one year.

### **III. EAM Regular Funding**

#### **A. Eligibility**

1. School of Medicine faculty in both Springfield and Carbondale are eligible to be principal investigators on EAM Regular funding. A faculty member must be at the assistant professor level (including Research Assistant Professor but excluding Lecturer and Instructor) or above and hold a terminal degree appropriate for their area of expertise.
2. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible to submit an application. However, senior investigators are encouraged to apply for EAM Near-Miss funding or to actively seek external funding.
3. During any one grant cycle, a faculty member may act as principal investigator on only one grant. A faculty member may be a co-investigator on any number of grants.
4. Newly appointed faculty members are not eligible to submit a EAM application until six (6) months after the date of their appointment.

#### **B. Guidelines for Financial Support**

1. Up to \$50,000 may be requested from EAM Regular funding.
2. Request of salaries for personnel such as post docs, residents, researchers and graduate students is acceptable. However, EAM Regular funding mechanism will not support faculty salaries.
3. The following budget lines are appropriate: Personnel (non-faculty), Commodities, Equipment (up to \$2,500), Contractual service, Travel (up to \$2,000) and Miscellaneous (up to \$2,000).
4. Principal Investigators (PIs) of EAM awards can request a one-time six-month extension of the funding period. To request an extension, the PI must submit the following to the ADRFA Office by May 1 of each fiscal year: (1) an explanation regarding why the funds were not expended as proposed, (2) a description of achievements relevant to the specific aims of the funded proposal during the funding period, (3) a budget for utilization of the carry-over funding and (4) a draft submission of an NIH grant.

#### **C. Allocation Priorities**

1. Applications will be evaluated by at least three reviewers based on scientific merit and will then undergo discussion and scoring by the convened Central Research Committee.

2. Because the major goal of the EAM award is to obtain funding from NIH, the criteria for the evaluation follow the standard criteria of NIH, i.e. “Significance”, “Innovation”, Approach”, “Investigator” and “Environment”. The definition of each criterion is found under Section I C-2 of this document.

#### **D. Submission of Applications**

1. The deadline for Regular EAM applications is usually in the fall and depends on when the school receives funding from the state. The exact deadlines will be announced annually by ADRFA.
2. The application packet must include the following items: (1) application forms, (2) Research plan (6-page limit) including Introduction (if appropriate), Specific aims, Significance, Preliminary study and Research methods. The project must be completed within one year. An “Introduction” section may be used to explain the relationship of the proposed project to a pending NIH application.

### **IV. EAM Near-Miss funding**

#### **A. Eligibility**

1. School of Medicine faculty in both Springfield and Carbondale are eligible to be principal investigators on EAM Near-Miss funding. A faculty member must be at the assistant professor level (including Research Assistant Professor but excluding Lecturer and Instructor) or above and hold a terminal degree appropriate for their area of expertise.
2. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible to submit an application.
3. An applicant must have already submitted the original grant application to NIH and have received critiques at the time of the application to EAM Near-Miss funding. Triaged applications are also eligible.
4. An application must be submitted within six months of the receipt of critiques from NIH.

#### **B. Guidelines for Financial Support**

1. A maximum of \$25,000 of budget can be requested from EAM Near-Miss funding.
2. Request of salaries for personnel such as post docs, residents, researchers and graduate students are acceptable. However, EAM-Near Miss funds cannot be used to support faculty salaries.
3. The following budget lines are appropriate: Personnel (other than faculty), Commodities, Contractual service and Miscellaneous (up to \$2,000). Funds cannot be used to support travel expenses.
4.
  - a. Equipment is defined as durable items costing over \$5,000 and is not eligible for EAM funding. Durable items that cost less than \$5,000 require strong justification.
  - b. A grant closure form will be due within two months after the end of the funding period.
5. EAM Near-Miss awards cannot be extended.

6. Faculty who receive funding through this mechanism are required to resubmit the application to the external agency within 12 *months* after receiving the EAM Near-Miss award.

**C. Allocation Priorities**

1. The applications will be evaluated and prioritized by members of the Near-Miss Funding Review Committee, which will be appointed by Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs. The Committee consists of at least three faculty members who have current NIH funding or have received funding from NIH in the recent past.
2. Priority will be given to those proposals for which the funds are most likely to allow the PI to successfully address concerns raised in the critique.
3. The decision is final. Resubmission of the same application is not allowed.
4. If the study receives external funding during the year of EAM support, remaining CRC money will revert back to the ADRFA EAM fund. Any publications arising from work supported by EAM funds must acknowledge that support.

**D. Submission of Applications**

1. Deadlines for submission are first Mondays in June and October.
2. The following documents in PDF format should be submitted by email to the office of ADRFA: (1) a copy of the original NIH application, (2) critiques from NIH, (3) a cover letter explaining plans to improve the original application in response to the critiques and (4) a one-year budget.

**E. Allocation Committee**

1. The function of Allocation Committee is to determine the allocation of funds based on the scientific merit scores given by CRC and Near-Miss Review Committees.
2. The Allocation Committee consists of Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs, and Chairs of Research Policy Committee, Faculty Council and Central Research Committee. If any of the standing members has a conflict of interest, then ADRFA may appoint an alternate member. The committee will be chaired by ADRFA.
3. In addition to the scientific merit scores, the Allocation Committee may consider the following:
  - a. Whether an application meets the overall program goal of the funding mechanism.
  - b. The appropriateness of requested money for each budget line
  - c. Prioritized areas of research as determined by School's strategic plan
  - d. Distribution of funding between established and unestablished investigators
  - e. Past and current EAM/CRC funding of the PI
  - f. Current external funding of the PI
  - g. Distribution of funding between meritorious clinical and basic science applications

4. In the event that the number of meritorious applications exceed the available total fund, the Allocation Committee may reduce the requested budget of some or all of the applications, and distribute the fund accordingly. On the other hand, if Allocation Committee finds that the number of meritorious applications is insufficient for total expenditure of available funds,, then the committee may elect to retain some of the available funds and to carry them over to the next cycle.