

**Guidelines for
Grant Review Committee (GRC), Excellence in Academic Medicine (EAM)
and Near-Miss Funding
(Revised 11/15/11)**

Mechanisms and purpose of funding

GRC funding

The goal of the GRC program is to assist faculty in generating preliminary data that can be used to support applications for extramural funding. Research Seed Grants (RSG) are evaluated for scientific merit by the GRC.

RSG 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.

Faculty who receive RSG funding are required to submit a post-award report to the ADRFA within 2 months after the end of the period of funding in order to maintain eligibility for future RSG funding.

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. These applications are evaluated and scored by the GRC according to NIH standards of review.

Faculty who receive EAM funding are required to submit a post-award report to the ADRFA within 2 months after the end of the period of funding in order to maintain eligibility for future EAM funding.

NEAR-MISS funding

The goal of the Near-Miss funding program is to support the improvement of grant applications that were submitted to NIH but were not funded. These applications are reviewed by an *ad hoc* review committee appointed by the ADRFA.

Faculty who receive funding through this mechanism are required to submit 1) a post-award report to the ADRFA within 2 months after the end of the period of funding and 2) a revised application to the NIH in order to maintain eligibility for future Near-Miss funding.

I. RSG grants

A. Eligibility

General Guidelines:

1. A faculty member must be at the assistant professor level (including Research Assistant Professor but excluding Lecturer and Instructor) or above. Principal investigators must have at least a 51 percent appointment in the Medical School to be eligible for RSG 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 be principal investigator on only one application. 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 previously-funded RSG project. RSG funds are not awarded to supplement ongoing, externally funded research projects.
4. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible to submit RSG 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 RSG support; 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 RSG award unless they can demonstrate that the external funding available during the fiscal year of requested RSG support is unrelated to the RSG application.
2. Established investigators are eligible to receive RSG support for a total of two years out of any four-year period.

Unestablished Investigator Guidelines:

1. The “two-years out of any four-years” rule in Section A2 will not apply to unestablished investigators.
2. If an investigator receives a RSG grant as an unestablished investigator and, subsequently receives an external award for a project unrelated to the RSG-supported project, the investigator will be considered an established investigator for the purposes of future RSG support.

B. Guidelines for Financial Support

1. The Grant Review Committee will consider applications requesting up to \$15,000.
2. Depending on the project, salaries for personnel can be considered an appropriate use of RSG funds. New personnel requests must be well justified. A request to partially support an existing researcher position must explain why the research project cannot be accomplished

without the requested personnel time. RSG funds can be used to pay for graduate student stipends. Support for faculty salary is not allowed under any circumstances.

3. Purchase of commodities is an appropriate use of RSG funds.
4. Equipment is defined as durable items costing over \$5,000 and is not eligible for funding. Durable items that cost less than \$5,000 (e.g., computers) require strong justification.
5. Payment for contractual services is an appropriate use of RSG funds. However, documentation must be provided to show that the requested service is more appropriate and less expensive than is performing that work using SIUSM resources.
6. RSG funds cannot be used to support travel, publication costs, biomedical illustration costs, computer costs, or purchase of journals.
7. The RSG funds are not to be used to support "long-term" ongoing research.
8. The funding period associated with the RSG mechanism cannot be extended. The entire award must be expended by June 30 of each fiscal year.

C. Review and Allocation Criteria

1. NIH Criteria for the Evaluation of Research Applications will apply, as follows:
 - a. **Overall impact.** The overall impact score reflects the reviewers' assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved, in consideration of the following review criteria.
 - b. **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?
 - c. **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)?
 - d. **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?
 - e. **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?

- f. 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. Applications receiving a scientific merit score of 3.0 or higher will not be funded.
- 4. The Allocation Subcommittee will recommend projects for funding based on scientific merit and the availability of research funds.

D. Submission of Applications

- 1. **Submission for Preliminary Review (approximately the first Monday in February)**
A special RSG deadline, approximately two months prior to the RSG deadline for funding consideration, 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 (approximately the first Monday in April).
 - 2. **Submission for Funding (approximately the first Monday in April)**
Revised applications from unestablished and clinical investigators and new applications from established or unestablished investigators will be accepted. Both the revised and the new applications will undergo the same RSG review process.
- E. Faculty who receive RSG funding are required to submit a post-award report to the ADRFA within 2 months after the end of the period of funding in order to maintain eligibility for future RSG funding.

II. EAM Grants

A. Eligibility

1. A faculty member must be at the assistant professor level (including Research Assistant Professor but excluding Lecturer and Instructor) or above.
2. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible.
3. During any one grant cycle, a faculty member may act as principal investigator on only one application. A faculty member may be a co-investigator on any number of applications.

B. Guidelines for Financial Support

1. Up to \$50,000 may be requested from EAM funding.
2. Request of salaries for personnel such as post docs, residents, researchers and graduate students is acceptable. However, EAM funding cannot be used to support faculty salaries.
3. The following budget lines are appropriate: Personnel (non-faculty), Commodities, Contractual service, Travel (up to \$2,000) and Miscellaneous (up to \$2,000). Equipment is defined as durable items costing over \$5,000 and is not eligible for funding. Durable items that cost less than \$5,000 (e.g. computers) require strong justification.
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. Review and allocation criteria

1. Applications will be reviewed by the GRC. Applications are evaluated by at least three reviewers based on scientific merit, as described in section I.C.1 above, and will then undergo discussion and scoring by the convened Grant Review Committee.
2. Because the major goal of the EAM award is to obtain funding from NIH, another criterion for the evaluation is likelihood of the project, if supported through the EAM mechanism, to lead to a funded NIH application.

D. Submission of Applications

1. The deadline for EAM applications is usually in the fall and depends on when the School receives its EAM funding. The exact deadlines will be announced annually by ADRFA.
2. Faculty who receive EAM funding are required to submit a post-award report to the ADRFA within 2 months after the end of the period of funding in order to maintain eligibility for future EAM funding.

III. Near-Miss funding

A. Eligibility

1. A faculty member must be at the assistant professor level (including Research Assistant Professor but excluding Lecturer and Instructor) or above.
2. Both established and unestablished investigators are eligible to submit an application.
3. An applicant must have already submitted a grant application to NIH and have received a critique at the time of the application for Near-Miss funding. Unscored NIH applications are eligible. Grants with NIH A1 critiques are also eligible. Such applications should clearly explain how the subsequent NIH submission will be revised to conform to NIH resubmission limitations.
4. An application for Near-Miss funding must be submitted within one year of the receipt of critiques from NIH.
5. Grants that have already been re-submitted to NIH are not eligible for Near-Miss funding.

B. Guidelines for Financial Support

1. A maximum of \$25,000 of budget can be requested for Near-Miss funding.
2. Request of salaries for personnel such as post docs, residents, researchers and graduate students are acceptable. However, 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, including publication costs). Funds cannot be used to support travel expenses. Equipment is defined as durable items costing over \$5,000 and is not eligible for funding. Durable items that cost less than \$5,000 (e.g. computers) require strong justification.
4. Near-Miss awards cannot be extended.
5. Faculty who receive funding through this mechanism are required to resubmit the application to the external agency within 12 *months* after receiving the Near-Miss award.

C. Review and Allocation Criteria

1. The applications will be evaluated and prioritized by members of an *ad hoc* Near-Miss Review Committee. This Committee will be appointed by Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs and will consist of at least three faculty members who have current NIH funding or have received funding from NIH in the recent past.
2. All members of the review committee will review and rank order all applications based on the likelihood that Near-Miss funding will result in a successful resubmission of the application to NIH. Scores from the reviewers will be compiled by the ADRFA Office and used to determine

3. 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.
4. The decision is final. Resubmission of the same application is not allowed.
5. If the study receives external funding during the year of Near-Miss support, remaining money will revert back to the ADRFA. Any publications arising from work supported by EAM funds must acknowledge that support.

D. Submission of Applications

1. Near-Miss applications will be solicited in the fall and spring. Exact deadlines will be announced by the ADRFA.
2. The following documents in one PDF format file should be submitted by email to the office of ADRFA: (1) Near-Miss Cover Page, (2) a copy of the original NIH application, (3) critiques from NIH, (4) a cover letter explaining plans to improve the original application in response to the critiques and (5) a one-year budget.

E. Allocation Committee

1. The function of Allocation Committee is to advise the ADRFA on the allocation of funds based on the scientific merit scores given by GRC review.
2. The Allocation Committee consists of Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs, and Chairs of Research Policy Committee, Faculty Council and Grant Review 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, assuming a conflict does not exist.
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/GRC funding of the PI
 - f. Current external funding of the PI
 - g. Distribution of funding between meritorious clinical and basic science applications
4. If the number of meritorious applications exceeds the available total funding, 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.

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