

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated January 8, 2026

What are the allowable activities and expenses for SPARC grants?

SPARC Research grant activities might include:

- pilot experiments, participant support, materials;
- fieldwork expenses, archival visits, research travel;
- trainee support: postdoctoral researchers; graduate and undergraduate research assistance.

SPARC Collaborative Research grants may also include:

- travel to build relationships with collaborating institutions;
- administrator time dedicated to assisting with the proposal;
- materials and supplies (ex. reagents, sequencing and computing resources, patient enrollment costs, art supplies, software license, access to data or publications).

SPARC Special Project grants may include:

- Developing a platform, such as a digital resource or podcast, to share scholarship
- Innovative public events with educational value
- Writing public-facing literature that is not a peer-reviewed publication nor the conventional mode of dissemination

Unallowable expenses for SPARC grants include:

- faculty salary;
- conference travel and attendance;
- subvention fees;
- equipment purchases.

What are examples of deliverables or results of a SPARC grant?

SPARC Research Grant Sample Deliverables (not an exhaustive list):

Individual Grant:

- A new scientific instrument, tool, or software
- Annotated bibliographies or databases of archival findings
- Article drafts (in revision or final)

- Creative work (studies or final)
- Design details for a creative or digital product
- External Grants
- Fellowship or grant proposals
- Fieldwork observations and interviews
- Patents
- Publications
- Transcription and coding

In addition to the deliverables above, Collaborative Research Grants might also result in:

- Co-produced scholarship or creative work for publication (study, draft, or final)
- Long-term research agenda co-designed with community partners, policymakers, or other external partners
- Public-facing recurring programming that amplifies ongoing research and scholarship

SPARC Special Project Grant Sample Deliverables (not an exhaustive list):

Discuss your creative idea with your [Research Development Manager!](#)

- Design details for a creative or digital product
- Events that engage students or trainees in an unconventional way
- Public-facing event or series
- Structure, schedule, and scripts for a podcast season (draft or final)

What stage of research is supported by SPARC grants?

The SPARC grant is designed to extend your research in a new or additional direction and amplify impact and productivity. Projects should be currently un-funded by any internal or external sources, and the proposal should demonstrate that the project will not be able to launch without SPARC funding.

What is the difference between a SPARC Collaborative Research Grant and a Center-Scale Planning Grant?

The goal of a Center-scale proposal is to establish a cohesive research hub with shared infrastructure, administrative support, and a unified vision that goes beyond individual projects. Centers incorporate different but related research themes, cross-disciplinary collaboration, educational and outreach components, and shared resources.

Multi-PI collaborative grants differ in that they typically don't have the institutional infrastructure, centralized administration, and programmatic coherence that are needed for a Center. They are also more project-focused and time-limited, whereas Centers are meant to be sustained and have long-term impact.

Can faculty be a PI or co-PI on multiple awarded applications?

Faculty may only serve as a PI or Co-PI once in a single round, and a PI/Co-PI may only hold one funded proposal in any year. Additionally, faculty should not submit more than one application in a round as PI/Co-PI to alleviate reviewer burden. Faculty must choose to apply for either a Research or Special Projects Grant in a single round, not both.

Should you have questions about the competitiveness of your proposal, please reach out to your [Research Development Manager](#).

What are the graduate student costs for the 2026 / 2027 academic year?

Cost Category	Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Summer 2027	Academic Year (Fall 2026 + Spring 2027)	Fiscal Year (Fall 2026 + Spring 2027 + Summer 2027)
Living Support	\$14,830	\$14,830	\$7,420	\$29,660	\$37,080
Tuition & Fees	\$5,620	\$5,620	\$2,168	\$11,240	\$13,408
Health Insurance	\$2,055	\$2,055	--	\$4,110	\$4,110
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$22,505</i>	<i>\$22,505</i>	<i>\$9,588</i>	<i>\$45,010</i>	<i>\$54,598</i>

Are no cost extensions allowed?

No, extensions will not be allowed. Award letters will detail the timeline for spending down the grant funds.

What are the formatting requirements for my proposal?

Proposals should be single-spaced and written in 11-pt Arial font. Margins should be at least 1 inch on all sides.

What is the Evaluation Criteria for SPARC grants?

SPARC Research Grant Evaluation Criteria:

- *Significance and Impact:* Does this proposal outline high-quality work that has the potential to benefit the targeted community or field? Is it relevant and timely? Does the project clearly extend the applicant's research, scholarship, or creative activity?
- *Project Narrative and Description:* Has the applicant thoroughly thought out and described the central question or hypothesis, research gap, objectives, and methodology?
- *Feasibility and Methodology:* Does the proposed timeline align with the work plan? Is the project at the right stage for the work proposed? Are the methods appropriate and current?
- *Potential for Future Funding / Sustainability:* Does the proposal outline thoughtful plans for funding and future sustainability? Are the funding mechanisms appropriate? Is it convincingly argued that the proposed work will position the applicant for competitive external proposals?
- *Personnel Expertise:* Does the applicant have the expertise to complete the work? Does the applicant have a track record of success in the general area of the proposed work?
- *Budget and Justification:* Are the budgeted items appropriate and to scale? Will the funds go to good use and further the project? Is the justification convincing? Is it apparent that there is a need for funding?

SPARC Special Project Grant Evaluation Criteria:

- *Novelty:* Does the proposed activity(ies) disseminate findings in a creative, novel, and unconventional way? Is the proposed method or creation different from traditional methods in the field?
- *Impact:* Will it impact the field and/or society?
- *Budget and Justification:* Are the budgeted items appropriate and to scale? Is the justification convincing?
- *Description:* Is the proposal well thought out?

What is the review process for SPARC Grants?

The Research Development Team recruits faculty members to participate in one of two panels:

1) the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Review Panel or 2) the Sciences Review Panel.

A panel consisting of faculty from departments in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences reviews proposals submitted by faculty in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. A panel consisting of faculty from all departments in the Sciences reviews proposals submitted by faculty in the Sciences.

Reviewers score their proposals based on the rubrics for the respective SPARC grants. Both panels use the same rubrics. Scores are submitted through Airtable and are averaged by the Research Development Team.

The Research Development Team convenes the Review panel to discuss their rationale for the scores in a "Study Section." Proposals that score very high by all reviewers usually move forward without discussion. Proposals that score very low by all reviewers are usually tabled without discussion. Proposals that received uneven scores (i.e. one reviewer provided a high score and another provided a low score) or mid-range scores are discussed by the panel one by one.

The Research Development Team compiles the scores and data for Dean's Office final review.

Award decisions are announced to faculty awardees and their department managers. Faculty who do not receive funding are invited to receive feedback from their Research Development Manager.

The Associate Dean for Research and Research Development Team publishes the percentage of grants funded for each cycle.

Can faculty apply for another SPARC Grant in subsequent rounds?

Faculty are welcome to apply for another round of SPARC Grants for **new** projects, even if they have previously been awarded A&S Seed, Planning, or SPARC Grant funds for another project. Prior awardees must include a statement in their proposals describing how their new project is **substantially different** from their previous project. Continuations of a previously funded project will not be reviewed.

Resubmissions of unfunded proposals from previous rounds are accepted, but we highly encourage faculty who plan to resubmit to revise their proposals in accordance with reviewer feedback.

What if my project plans change after having been awarded a SPARC Grant proposal?

Please contact your Research Development Manager and the Associate Dean for Research to discuss any changes to your project plans that occur after receiving funding.

Can I ask my Research Development Manager for feedback on my proposal?

You may reach out to your Research Development Manager with general questions about the program or submission logistics. You may also inquire about your topic and the fit of your idea for the SPARC Research or Special Projects Grant categories; however, they will not provide detailed feedback or comments on proposal drafts.

