

East Carolina University
Faculty Senate
RESEARCH/CREATIVE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the
Research and Creative Activity Awards (RCAA) Competition

1. Are there funds available for a competition this year?

Yes. Research and Graduate Studies has contributed \$25,000 total for Research and Creative Activity Awards. As of now there is no guarantee for funding in future years.

2. Is there a cap on proposal amounts?

The committee is expecting to select between 4-8 proposals and strongly encourages a budget cap of \$6,250.

3. I am currently receiving funds from another University source. Am I eligible for a RCAA?

No. Faculty currently receiving Faculty Senate Teaching Grants, and Research Development Awards, University Startup funds, or awards from the East-West Collaborative Program are ineligible for RCAA funding in the time period that their award is active.

4. I received a RCAA in last year's competition. Am I eligible for a RCAA this year?

No. RCA Awardees from last year's competition are not eligible for an Award this year.

5. I am a fixed-term faculty member. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes. Previously, fixed-term faculty members were not eligible, but the guidelines were changed in December 2019 (FS Resolution #19-97) to allow fixed-term faculty to apply.

6. I am a faculty member in the Brody School of Medicine. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes; if you are a full-time tenure-track or tenured faculty member in BSOM, you are eligible to apply. Please note that 12-month employees are not eligible to apply for summer stipends.

7. What kinds of proposals do you prefer to fund?

The Committee seeks to award funding for meritorious proposals. One working definition of that word is "proposals that bring credit on the individual, his or her department, and East Carolina University as a whole." The likelihood of publication of the project's results in a major journal certainly would strengthen an application as would the likelihood of a work of art's being included in a national juried competition. Good proposals should:

- show that the project will make a significant contribution to the individual's professional enrichment and growth as well as to the field, such as through publication, presentation, performance, or exhibition;
- demonstrate that the applicant is capable of doing the project; i.e., that the tasks proposed are within the applicant's competence;
- justify budget expenditures with amounts which will seem reasonable to the RCA Committee (for example: travel to an archive in another country should be based on the going rate for coach class flights to/from the archive plus state per diem for the time spent there);
- be stated in a way that educated, intelligent evaluators who are not in your field of academic endeavor can understand and appreciate. Excessive use of jargon will hinder a proposal. Equations can be included but should also be explained. Charts and/or diagrams should be clearly labeled.

8. What is the process by which proposals are evaluated?

The RCA Committee is subdivided into four subcommittees: Social Science; Natural Science/Mathematics; Humanities/Fine Arts; and Health/Medicine. A few days after the application deadline, the chairs of the four subcommittees will review the applications and sort them into one of these four areas. Each member of the four subcommittees will read each of the proposals and then the subcommittees will meet to review the scores assigned by the individual members. The scores from the subcommittees are then forwarded to the RCAA chair who convenes a meeting of the Committee to consider the individual scores and to develop a final list for funding.

9. If I am awarded a summer stipend, when can I receive it?

Funding for this competition should be awarded in late February or early March. All expenditures must occur before the end of the fiscal year, i.e., June 30.

10. How many copies of the proposal must I submit? Where do I submit my proposal?

One original paper copy of the proposal should be submitted to the Research/Creative Activities Committee, c/o Faculty Senate Office, 140 Rawl Annex, 109 mail stop by 12:00 noon on January 6, 2016. No proposals will be accepted after this deadline. The Faculty Senate office will observe the University holiday schedule and asks anyone wishing to submit their proposal early to email the Faculty Senate office at faculty senate@ecu.edu and arrangements will be made. Please be attentive to the formatting requirements; in the past, the RCA Committee has disqualified applications for not adhering to the formatting requirements.

In addition, the applicant must send an electronic version of the proposal in PDF format to the Faculty Senate office (faculty senate@ecu.edu) by the 12:00 noon on January 6, 2016 deadline. Acknowledgement will be sent to each applicant once both paper copy and pdf file are received. The grant proposal form may be downloaded from the RCAC website at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/rq/research.cfm>.

11. I am applying for both a Faculty Senate Teaching Grant and a RCAA. What happens if I get recommended for both?

You can only accept one in any given funding cycle. You can re-apply for the one you decide not to accept in the next round of the competition if you wish. The same situation applies to funding from other university sources, such as RDAs or the new East-West initiative. If you receive a recommendation for funding from more than one source you will need to decide which one to accept.

12. I am applying for an outside grant (from the National Science Foundation or the National Endowment for the Arts or somewhere else) and also for a RCAA. What happens if I get both?

University policy sets the maximum amount of pay that an individual on a nine-month contract can receive at 133% of base salary. An outside grant and a RCAA may both be accepted, provided that doing so does not result in a violation of that policy. If accepting both would violate that policy, you will need to choose which one to accept.

13. I have received funding from the RCA Committee in the past. Am I eligible to apply again? Will having received funding in the past count against me?

Past recipients of RCAA funding must have a final report of their previous award(s) on file in the Faculty Senate office. Not having a final report filed is grounds for disqualification from this year's competition. The Committee does not have a bias against previous recipients as long as previous grant funding has resulted in significant contributions in the field in which you are active.

14. I am a senior tenured faculty member who has a number of highly regarded publications but I am looking to move into a somewhat different area of research. Will RCA look favorably on a proposal from me given that I've not done previous work in my new field?

This is an interesting question which comes up every now and then. The RCA Committee will not simply fund training in a new field; for example, it will not fund basic statistical methodology for someone who has no training in statistics. Nevertheless, it is possible that in order to complete a particular project, the applicant must complete some additional training. It is crucial that the funding be requested for a project, and that any training is essential to complete the project. As a recent example, a Foreign Language and Literature professor was funded to attend advanced language training in Nahuatl in Mexico in order to be able to critically analyze a 15th Century Aztec play. An applicant's previous record of work or publication—even if it is not in the new area of research—will be viewed favorably by the Committee in evaluating your proposal to the extent that it demonstrates competence to conduct the proposed project.

15. I am seeking funding to purchase a piece of equipment under my project proposal. Will the Committee fund such an item?

In general, requests for equipment will only be funded if the equipment is necessary to complete the project, and is specialized enough that it is not generally available elsewhere on campus or through non-RCA funding (such as ECU's faculty computer rollout program). Requests for equipment or software purchase will not be supported if the needed equipment or software exists elsewhere on campus and is accessible to the applicant, or if the item is to be for general departmental use. Applicants are encouraged to determine the availability of desired equipment from other locations on campus.

16. My project involves international travel. Will the Committee support such a request?

The travel must be essential to completion of the project. Travel to an archive that is the only source of information on a specific topic to be researched is one example of this. In the past few years, the Committee has recommended funding for international travel to France, England, Japan, Mexico, and Africa. In each case, the applicant made the case that the information to be gathered at the archive was not available anywhere else and that such travel was essential. Travel for the purpose of presenting results at meetings will not be funded.

All travel funded out of project proposals must be specified on Line #2 on the budget form (page 9 of the guidelines) and justified. Funds requested should be an estimate of coach air fare to/from the destination, surface transportation on site, state per diem for the days spent, and other associated expenses. (Consult ECU Business Manual for allowable expenses.)