# STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FUND

# OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

## OVERVIEW & PROGRAM GOALS

The Strategic Investment Fund is designed to support and build capacity to position research teams for success in securing major, center–scale grant opportunities, or to create a series of investments (federal, state, philanthropic) in a strategic research area.

There are two mechanisms under the Strategic Investment Fund. The Track 1 award provides funding for researchers to pursue immediate opportunities for major submissions (i.e., new center grant FOA) or engage in strategic planning in preparation for a Track 2 proposal. The Track 2 award is designed to provide significant administrative and proposal development capacity through external contractors or other strategic collaborators to engage in a multi-year proposal development and project execution for a transformative research center proposal (i.e., NSF STC, DOE EFRC, etc.). Both types of awards also may use funding to generate preliminary data and/or build partnerships with external collaborators (i.e., national labs, other institutions). While not mandated, it is likely that competitive Track 2 awards would already have completed a successful Track 1.

Faculty funded via this program are expected to achieve the proposal development and submission milestones articulated in their proposal. Additional outcomes, such as publications, conference presentations, and student mentorship are expected as appropriate for the discipline. Researchers funded in this program are expected to work closely with OVPRI’s Strategic Research Initiative team to ensure they have the training, support, and resources to secure and launch new major federal awards.

## TIMELINE

**Deadline:** Rolling

Proposals may be submitted at any time. Research Development Services (RDS) aims to provide a response within one month of submission.

## ELIGIBILITY

**Eligible Principal Investigators (PIs):** Eligible PIs are tenure-track faculty and career research faculty with the classification of *research associate*, *research professor, research scientist, research engineer, principal research scientist,* *or librarian* with 0.50+ FTE appointments during the academic year of the research award.

**Ineligible PIs:**

* Faculty who received an OVPRI Research Seed Grant within the past 3 award cycles.
* Emeritus, retired, courtesy, visiting, instructor, and pro-tem faculty, as well as postdoctoral scholars.
* Recipients of any competitive award from the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation who have not submitted a final report for their prior award(s).

*Note:* Faculty who are ineligible to serve as PI/Co-PI may serve as key personnel on a project team.

Faculty are only permitted to serve as the PI or Co-PI on one application per cycle. Applicants may serve as collaborators or team members on additional proposals.

## BUDGET & USE OF FUNDS

**Track 1 Awards:** Up to $85,000 for a project period of up to 12 months

**Track 2 Awards:** Up to $250,000 for a project period of 12-36 months

**Allowable Costs:** Funds may be used for costs necessary to plan and execute the proposed research project (consistent with university and state rules) including:

* Travel, which may include funds to support a planning workshop or faculty retreat, to host a distinguished speaker who will help you initiate your project, to visit key resources and/or archives, or to visit a program officer to discuss your project
* Equipment
* Materials and supplies
* Contractual services
* Salary for career research faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and/or technical personnel under the supervision of the principal investigator
  + *Note 1:* If you plan to hire graduate employees, please include only their salary and OPE on your budget. The GE tuition, insurance, and fees will be contributed by the OVPRI, at the College of Arts and Sciences rates, to maximize funds available for your work. If your unit has higher tuition/fee rates, please include the supplemental amount under “OTHER” on the budget template
  + *Note 2:*The R&R Budget template used for your submission automatically calculates and auto-populates cells for GE tuition, fees, and insurance. *Please work with your budget/grant administrator to ensure your budget only includes salary and Other Payroll Expenses for GEs*
* Other direct costs: core/shared user facility use, speaker stipend, etc.
  + For project budgets that include use of Core Facilities, OVPRI funds will be transferred directly to the Core (funds for all other costs will be transferred to a faculty-managed departmental index for the award).
* Faculty summer stipend and/or course release (as per departmental policies and guidelines)

**Unallowable Costs:**

* Replacing current funding from another internal or external source
* Renovation, remodeling, or alteration of research laboratories or core/shared facilities

**Matching Funds:**

* Given the potential return on investment and benefit to the faculty member’s home unit, proposals are encouraged to identify potential matching contributions from their department, institute, school, or college.

**Funds Sent Directly to Core Facilities**

* Funds budgeted for Core Facilities in awarded applications will be directly distributed to Core Facilities to be used by the investigator. This should be explicitly spelled out in award letters as applicable.

## APPLICATION COMPONENTS

**Application:**

1. ***RDS Pre-Consultation:*** 
   1. Although not required, it is highly recommended that anyone interested in applying to the Strategic Opportunity Fund contact [rds@uoregon.edu](mailto:rds@uoregon.edu) in order to set up a pre-consultation with Research Development Services to determine if this mechanism is appropriate for your given project before undertaking significant work on the application.
2. [***Application Form***](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/d032f9a51ae24def8096de63a8761762)***:***
   1. Basic Information: Please complete the form’s text boxes. (Note: the form cannot be saved part way through).
3. ***Proposal Documents:*** (Times New Roman font, single spaced, in 11 point or larger and 1” margins).
   1. **Proposal Narrative** **(4-page limit):** Use the [Strategic Opportunity Fund Project Narrative TEMPLATE](#ProjectNarrative) at end of this document to complete this component of the application.
   2. **References Cited (no page limit).**
   3. **Biographical Sketch or CV** **(5-page limit):** All PIs should submit a Biographical Sketch or CV. While there is no specific format, you are encouraged to use the format associated with the funding agency to which you would typically apply (e.g., NSF, NIH, NEH, etc.).
   4. **Current and Pending Support** **(no page limit):** For each PI, use the [Current and Pending Support TEMPLATE](#_Current_and_Pending) at end of this document to list any current and/or pending funding for any research project at UO, whether or not related to the proposed project.
   5. **Budget:** Use the “R&R 1 to 5 Year Detailed Budget” Excel template on the Sponsored Projects Forms [webpage](https://research.uoregon.edu/forms/sponsored-projects-forms#Budget%20Templates).
      1. *Note 1: Internal awards do not require indirect (F&A) costs. Please set that cell in the template to 0.*
      2. *Note 2:*If you are including graduate employees, see *Budget & Use of Funds* section above for details on how to budget for these personnel.
   6. **Budget Justification:** Use the [Budget Justification TEMPLATE](#_Budget_Justification_TEMPLATE) at the end of this document to complete this component of the application.
      1. *If this is a multiple-PI proposal, please note the potential distribution of ICC returns (for the target external award) among administering units.*
   7. [**Unit Head Approval Form**](https://research.uoregon.edu/sites/default/files/2024-12/Unit%20Head%20approval%20fillable_all%2012-11-24%20accessible.pdf)**:** Scanned copy or e-signature confirming your unit head approves of the proposed application, including the budget.

**Submission Instructions:** Complete all components of the application and combine them into a single PDF *in the order listed above*, with each component on its own page. Save with the naming convention *[Contact PI Last Name] \_FY 24 Strategic Investment Fund*.

1. Fill out the basic information in the online application form.
2. Upload the complete PDF.
3. Submit the form.
4. Each PI may complete the demographic survey described below (optional).

[***Optional Demographic Survey (online)***](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/b6eda4d487654b5794adfa2e0d0054dd)***:*** The OVPRI is committed to creating an environment that fosters sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and racial and ethnic backgrounds present in our community. The application form includes a section to disclose demographic information aimed at assessing the success of our activities towards this goal. Response to these questions is entirely optional and is not considered in award decisions. This information will not be seen by the review committee, but rather used by OVPRI leadership to ensure our internal granting programs are inclusive and equitable and serve diverse populations at UO. We welcome submission of this information from all PIs on the project.

## REVIEW PROCESS & CRITERIA

RDS will conduct an initial review of applications to ensure that proposals are in compliance with all guidelines. A review panel, convened by RDS, will evaluate the grant proposals and recommend proposals for funding to the Vice President for Research and Innovation who makes the final funding decisions.

**Criteria:** See an example of the [review sheet](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/d8159c0a8db84ab7871bec7abad9c63a) as used by the review committee when scoring proposals.

1. *Research Project*: Weighted 30%
   1. How clearly does the applicant describe the research problems or questions? Does the applicant specify a gap in the research to be addressed?
   2. Is the project’s significance well-articulated? Does the project have intellectual merit?
   3. Does this project have the potential to be transformative for the University’s research and training mission?
2. *Research Approach*: Weighted 25%
   1. How clearly does the project describe the overall project aim and/or goals?
   2. Is the methodology clearly articulated and appropriate to the proposed project?
   3. Are the roles and responsibilities of the team members clearly described and well-justified?
   4. Do the research activities proposed enhance the competitiveness of the project for external funding?
3. *Researcher or Research Team*: Weighted 10%
   1. Does the researcher/ research team possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to accomplish the proposed research objectives and be competitive in applying for the intended solicitation?
   2. Does the researcher/ research team provide evidence of past success in obtaining external research funding?
   3. How does the proposed research align with the researcher/ team members’ long-term research agendas?
4. *External Funding Strategy*: Weighted 30%
   1. Does the research team clearly identify an external funding mechanism or program to which they intend to apply?
   2. Does the proposed research align with the funding mechanism and the funding priorities of the external sponsor(s)?
   3. Does the application describe a feasible and appropriate strategy for preparing and submitting a proposal for external funding?
   4. Do the proposed investments represent the highest impact ways of developing a competitive proposal? Is UO well-positioned to compete for this award if the proposed activities are completed?
   5. If applicable based on funding targets, do the proposed strategies for developing a competitive broader impacts plan, plans for enhancing diverse perspectives, or other funder-specified expectations for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion position the team for success? Are the future plans well-conceptualized?
5. *Timeline and Budget*: Weighted 5%
   1. Does the applicant describe a realistic timeline to accomplish research goals and proposal development activities?
   2. Is the budget well-justified? Will the budget support the development and implementation of the project?

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## REPORTING

A final report is required and due to Research Development Services no later than one month (30 days) after the conclusion of funding. RDS will supply awardees a link to the final report form in the last quarter of their project.

## INQUIRIES

Questions about the program’s application or submission process may be directed to Research Development Services, [rds@uoregon.edu](mailto:rds@uoregon.edu).

## Project Narrative

(4-page limit, delete blue text)

Please complete all six sections and use the headings designated below. (References do not count in the four-page limit for the narrative).

**Research Project** (weighted 30%)

* Clearly describe the research problems or questions addressed by the project, being sure to specify a gap in the research to be addressed.
* Describe the project’s significance, including a discussion of its intellectual merit.
* Describe how the project has the potential to be transformative for the University’s research and training mission.

**Research Approach** (weighted 25%)

* Describe the overall project aim and/or goals.
* Clearly articulate your methodology.
* Describe and justify the roles and responsibilities of the team members.
* Explain how the research activities proposed enhance the competitiveness of the project for external funding.

**Researcher or Research Team** (weighted 10%)

* Describe how the researcher/ research team members possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to accomplish the proposed research objectives and be competitive in applying for the intended solicitation.
* Describe the researcher/ research team members past success in obtaining external research funding.
* Explain how the proposed research aligns with the researcher/ team members’ long-term research agendas.

**External Funding Strategy** (weighted 30%)

* Identify an external funding mechanism or program to which you intend to apply and explain how the proposed research aligns with the funding mechanism and the funding priorities of the external sponsor(s).
* Describe a feasible and appropriate strategy for preparing and submitting a proposal for external funding.
* Describe how the proposed investments represent the highest impact ways of developing a competitive proposal. Explain how UO is well-positioned to compete for this award if the proposed activities are completed.
* If applicable based on funding targets, describe the proposed strategies for developing a competitive broader impacts plan, plans for enhancing diverse perspectives, or other funder-specified expectations for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion position the team for success.

**Timeline and Budget** (weighted 5%)

* Present Gannt chart, timeline, milestones, and/or go/no decision points from proposed project start date through time of submission.

## Current and Pending Support

(no page limit, delete blue text)

For the PIs, please provide a list of current and/or pending funding for any research project at UO, whether or not related to the proposed project. Include any awards you have received from the University of Oregon (excluding start-up funds), as well as external awards. No page limit enforced, so please expand sections as necessary.

***NOTE: You may submit the NIH or NSF Current and Pending Support generated by SciENcv in lieu of this template.***

**Name**:

Current Funding

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

Pending Funding

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

Funding Source:

Project Title:

Project Period:

Total Award Amount:

Does this project overlap with the proposed work?

## Budget Justification

(no page limit, delete blue text)

# Describe each budget line item listed in the budget template, breaking out costs by unit as applicable. Giving clear details will help the reviewers understand the reasonableness of your request. No page limit enforced, so please expand sections as necessary.

***NOTE: Your department/unit head must approve the budget with the fillable PDF linked in the Application Components section above.***

**Personnel**

# In this section describe the effort from career research faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, and/or technical personnel under the supervision of the principal investigator, as well as faculty summer stipend and/or course release (as per departmental policies and guidelines).

*Principal Investigator Support*

Detail requested course release and/or summer stipend effort. NOTE: Please follow school/college/unit guidelines. Departments must approve the budget request.

*Technical/NTTF Salary*

Provide the names of the faculty and other personnel for which funding is requested, as well as a brief description of % effort and role/responsibility.

*Graduate Student*

Provide the number and % FTE of graduate student(s).

*Undergraduate Student*

Provide the number of student hours anticipated.

**GE tuition/fees/ insurance**

**Outside Collaborators/Consultants**

**Equipment (stand-alone pieces over $5K)**

**Materials & Supplies**

When anticipated, the proposal budget justification must indicate the general types of expendable materials and supplies required.

**Travel**

Travel activities must be specified, itemized, and justified by destination and cost. Funds may be requested for fieldwork, attendance at meetings and conferences, and other travel associated with the proposed work, including subsistence.

**Other Direct Costs**

E.g., core/shared user facility use, speaker stipend, publication/documentation/dissemination costs, computer services, etc.

**Potential ICC Distribution (if applicable)**

If this is a multiple-PI proposal, please note the potential distribution of ICC returns (for the target external award) among administering units.