

# **COLLEGE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES FY 2027**

## **Purpose:**

The College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST) at Illinois State University (ISU) supports the research and scholarly efforts of tenured and tenure-track faculty through the University Research Grant (URG) Program. This program, supported by funds from the Provost's Office and CAST, provides faculty with funding to support projects approved on a competitive basis.

URG applications can be submitted to one of three programs: "Pre-tenure Research Development", "Pre-tenure Grant Development", or "Post-tenure Grant Development".

The primary purpose of the "Grant Development" Programs is to provide faculty with funds to develop research programs that have a high probability of acquiring external funding and, therefore, to complement proposals submitted to an external funding agency. The primary purpose of the "Pre-Tenure Research Development" Program is to support quality research efforts by pre-tenured faculty members that contribute to a defined line of scholarly inquiry.

In the URG program, research is defined as "A formal procedure which contributes to the expansion of basic knowledge or applies such knowledge to the solution of problems in society or exemplifies creative expression in a specific field of study. The results of research to be recognized by this program must be communicated to professionals outside the university through a peer review process in a manner appropriate to the discipline." The results of research, referred to in the ASPT process as *Scholarly and Creative Activity*, include but are not limited to peer-reviewed authorship, application for and/or receipt of grants, creative productivity, presentation of professional papers, and other achievements specific to particular disciplines and areas of study.

## **Eligibility:**

1. CAST Tenure track and tenured faculty members are eligible to submit proposals. An individual not returning to the University in the fall must resign a funded grant.
2. Incomplete professional outcomes from a prior URG award will be considered in funding recommendations.
3. A recipient of two consecutive URGs in the "Pre-Tenure Research Development" category must apply in the "Grant Development" category before reapplying in the "Pre-Tenure Research Development" category.
4. Only one URG proposal per faculty member will be accepted in a fiscal year.

## **Evaluation Process:**

Each proposal will be evaluated by the CAST Research Committee (CRC). The CRC serves in an advisory role to the Dean of the College of Applied Science and Technology. The CAST Associate Dean serves as an ex-officio member and chair of the committee. Final decisions on allocation of funds will be made by the Dean in consultation with the Associate Dean. The number of proposals funded depends on the availability of funds and the quality of proposals in a fiscal year.

Proposals reflecting the scholarship of teaching and learning are appropriate in any category. The scholarship of teaching and learning is defined at ISU as: “Systematic reflection of teaching and learning made public.” Proposals focusing on curriculum or program development are not suitable for funding under this program.

Proposals focused on the design and development of processes and products are also appropriate in any category. Means by which the suitability, effectiveness, and/or feasibility of the process or product will be assessed, evaluated, or tested must be addressed in the proposal.

Literature reviews are not suitable for funding under this program.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

All submissions will be evaluated by these criteria:

1. *Quality of the proposal.* The narrative must clearly a) define the research problem and b) describe an appropriate methodology that will be used to investigate the problem. Further, the specific objectives of the proposal must be clearly stated. All professional outcomes must be consistent with the highest academic standards for scholarship in CAST.
2. *Importance to the discipline.* The narrative must clearly explain how the proposal will make a significant impact on the field of study.
3. *Breadth and depth of the proposed research.* The applicant must explain how the proposal aligns with a long-range research agenda and the development of a focused line of research.
4. *Research productivity.* The applicant must demonstrate potential for scholarly accomplishments from the project. The Professional Outcomes must be indicated in the application.
5. *Multiple investigator collaboration.* Each investigator is eligible for \$5000 in funding. All multiple investigator applications must clearly demonstrate a justifiable contribution from each investigator. The URG will be evaluated in the category of the most senior investigator.
6. *Potential for external funding support.* All proposals including those in the category of “Research Development” must include a statement regarding the potential for external support of the research including at least one identified source of funding support (agency or foundation). The external support described must be at or above a funding level of \$10,000 to be considered. Outcomes for “Grant Development” awards must include the submission for external support at or above a funding level of \$10,000 and indicate how the URG will enable the submission for external funding.
7. *Applicant's research funding.* The proposal must include the applicant's past record in seeking and obtaining external research funding.

### **Proposal Format:**

An application must adhere to the CAST Guidelines for a URG Proposal or it will not be considered for funding.

The budget of a URG is limited to a maximum of \$5,000 per investigator/applicant.

For applicants applying under the category of Post-Tenure Grant Development, not more than 50% of the budget may be applied to salary for the post-tenure PI.

All budget items must be justified on the budget page. It is possible that the final budget will be reduced by the CAST Dean's office depending on the total amount of funding available.

### **Due Date and Notification of Award:**

All applications are due via email (Word attachment only; no pdf files) to your Chair/Director for concurrence, who

will then forward the application to Cara Rabe-Hemp ([cerabe@ilstu.edu](mailto:cerabe@ilstu.edu)). Applications are due to Cara Rabe-Hemp by 4:00 pm on Monday, February 2, 2026. Applicants will receive tentative notification of the results of the review process from the CAST Associate Dean in May 2026. As much of the URG funding is provided by the Office of the Provost and the availability of that funding is dependent upon the release of the State of Illinois budget, applicants are hereby notified that funding cannot be guaranteed and that provided funding may not reach the PI until after July 1st. You should plan for this in your timeline but keep in mind that the outcomes must still be reported by January 17, 2028.

**Additional Outcomes Requirement:**

All recipients of URGs may be asked to provide a brief (about 5 minutes) oral presentation of the findings to a forum that includes CAST administrators, faculty, and staff. This event will be scheduled as a single session for all presentations in October.