

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE
Office of University Graduate Studies
Graduate Student Research, Service, and Educational Leadership (RSEL) Mini Grant
Program: Procedures and Guidelines

RSEL MINI-GRANT PROPOSALS: These proposals can be submitted at any time. Mini-grants require:

- cover sheet
- budget summary and justification
- statement of assurance from mentor
- narrative (2 page max.)
- references and appendices

Mini-grants can provide up to \$500 in funding. An individual student may receive only one RSEL Mini-Grant, but this does not preclude him or her from applying for a Full Grant. The total funding (full grant and mini-grant) for an individual student may not exceed \$2200.

Mini-Grants can be applied for at any time by sending the required materials as an attachment (one continuous Word or PDF) via email (gradstudies@uwlax.edu) to the Office of Graduate Studies, 223 Graff Main Hall.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

THE GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH, SERVICE, AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM: The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse provides funding on a competitive basis to support graduate student research, service, and educational leadership (RSEL) projects. Full- and part-time graduate students who are enrolled in a graduate degree program are eligible and are encouraged to apply for grants. Special, non-degree graduate students are not eligible for this program. Students must be registered for a minimum of one graduate credit during the term (summer or semester) following the semester of the grant award.

If your proposal is not funded during one funding cycle, it may be resubmitted for a subsequent funding cycle. The Graduate Council equally welcomes single or multidisciplinary proposals, and multiple student investigators may submit a single proposal and work collaboratively on one research, service, or educational leadership project. Funding for the RSEL Grant Program comes from the following sources: UW-L Academic Initiative, and Office of University Graduate Studies.

RESEARCH DEFINITION: For the purposes of this grant program, **the Graduate Council defines the term “research” as any original, investigative, or other type of scholarly activity.** As such, the proposed work may include a variety of original and creative efforts directed toward the advancement of knowledge and understanding within any academic discipline. The Council recognizes that methods of inquiry vary among disciplines. Methodologies used in the basic and applied sciences, for example, will likely differ from those in education. Nonetheless, all proposed projects must meet the following criteria: (1) demonstrate a degree of originality and independence on the part of the student(s), (2) clearly stated research goals, (3) a realistic methodology that appropriately addresses the goals, (4) a clear and reasonable timeline, and (5) results or products with potential for publication, presentation, and/or dissemination through other acceptable means of professional communication or expression.

SERVICE DEFINITION: For the purposes of this grant program, **the Graduate Council defines the term “service” as any original project that directly serves the local, regional, national, or international community through the application of a student’s professional knowledge and expertise to a real world problem or issue.** The intent of this part of the grant program is to recognize that some graduate students may undertake major projects that directly benefit governmental and/or non-governmental organizations, but are not “research” as defined above. The rigor of service projects should be comparable to that of research projects and must meet the same standards in that they (1) demonstrate a degree of originality and independence on the part of the student(s), (2) have clearly stated goals, (3) follow a realistic methodology that appropriately addresses the goals, (4) adhere to a clear and reasonable timeline, and (5) produce results or products that not only benefit a service agency, but also have potential for publication, presentation, and/or dissemination through other acceptable means of professional communication or expression.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEFINITION: For the purposes of this grant program, the Graduate Council defines “**educational leadership**” as any activity that enhances or improves the practice within one’s academic discipline. The intent of this part of the grant program is to recognize that some graduate students may seek experiences that directly improves their practice within their given field or improves current practice (e.g. action research, district initiative, advanced certification), but that are not part of any research project and are not service related. These projects may be designed to enhance licensed school personnel ongoing development of educational leadership within a particular district and/or school. Like the research and service projects, educational leadership projects must meet certain criteria as follows: (1) demonstrate a degree of originality in that the activity is not normally attended by the student, (2) have clearly stated goals, (3) a methodology and/or action plan that appropriately addresses the goals, (4) a clear and reasonable timeline, and (5) produce results or products that directly benefit one’s educational practice and also have potential for publication, presentation, and/or dissemination through other acceptable means of professional communication or expression.

Educational leadership opportunities must fall into the category of Diversity, International, or Professional Development as defined below.

DIVERSITY: The intent of this part of the grant program is to recognize that some graduate students may benefit from an experience in a more diverse environment than the one in which they are currently studying/working. This experience should directly relate to the degree program of study currently being sought through UW-L.

INTERNATIONAL: The intent of this part of the grant program is to recognize that some graduate students may benefit from an international experience. This experience should directly relate to the degree program of study currently being sought through UWL.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: The intent of this part of the grant program is to recognize that some graduate students enrolled in a program of study at UWL may benefit from attending a conference, workshop, training program, or other relevant professional activity. In order to receive funding, students must clearly show that participation in the activity is directly related to and supportive of their culminating or capstone project(s).

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

There are basically two kinds of expenses that RSEL grants fund, 1) actual costs for conducting the project (equipment, consumables, etc...) and/or 2) travel to conduct research. RSEL grants do not fund student stipends.

Details on Travel Expenses: RSEL grants cannot be used for travel to conferences, symposia, or exhibits. There are Graduate Student Professional Travel Funds available to students wishing to attend professional conferences and/or present their scholarly work. Please contact the Office of Graduate Studies (608-785-8124; gradstudies@uwlax.edu) or go to the [Grants and Assistantships](#) website for more details. RSEL funds must be used for travel to conduct research. Furthermore, if the funds are requested for overseas travel, the applicant should provide evidence that she or he has consulted with the Office of International Education about UWL insurance and other requirements for official overseas travel.

RESTRICTIONS: Students must be in good academic standing to receive funding and may receive only one RSEL grant (individually or as a collaborator on a project with multiple investigators) per graduate degree. *Funding from this source will not be available for any work already completed.* **Failure on the part of applicants to precisely follow Section II (Application Procedures) or Section III (Proposal Writing Guidelines) of this document will result in automatic disqualification of the proposal.**

COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS: Applicants must be aware of the regulations to which the University must comply. Among the most important to consider are compliance with regulations for responsible conduct of research, protection of human subjects, animal care, and use of hazardous biological and chemical materials. Information on these policies may be obtained from the Office of Graduate Studies, 223 Graff Main Hall (608-785-8124) or the Office of Graduate Studies website.

FUNDING MAXIMUM: The RSEL Mini Grant can provide up to \$500 in funding. **Students who have received a mini-grant may still receive a full grant, although the total of the two grants must not exceed \$2,200 (subject to budgetary restraints) per graduate degree.** Funds will be made available only following notification of the awards, and project activities may begin only at that time (if compliance with regulations, where applicable, has been met).

FINAL REPORT: Grant recipients are required to present at the Annual Celebration of Student Research & Creativity and submit a Final Report as described in Section IV of this document. The report is a requirement for graduation and must be submitted to the Office of University Graduate Studies two (2) weeks prior to graduation or within 30 days of project completion. A copy of the report should also be provided to the Department Chair or Program Director. Recipients may also be asked to participate with the Graduate Council the year following their award to assist in the review of new applications.

II. GENERAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- Step 1.** Identify a research, service, or educational leadership project of interest to you. Select a UWL graduate faculty advisor with interests similar to yours and discuss project possibilities with him or her. Then, work with the graduate faculty advisor to plan and design your project.
- Step 2.** Write a draft of your proposal narrative that closely follows the guidelines of this document ([see Section III D, Narrative](#)). After your graduate faculty advisor has reviewed your proposal narrative, revise it as a “final draft” and design a budget to fund a maximum of \$500 of expenses required for your project ([see Section III B, Project Budget Summary](#)). Ask your project advisor to write a detailed letter in support of your proposed project ([see Section III C, Letter of Support](#)).
- Step 3.** You, your Graduate Faculty Advisor, and the Department Chair or Graduate Program Director must sign the cover page ([Attachment A](#)) of your proposal. (Please note: This does not guarantee funding.)
- Step 4.** **You are responsible for collating and scanning the whole proposal (including signature page, narrative, budget, faculty letter of support) and submit it by email as one continuous Word or PDF attachment to gradstudies@uwlax.edu on or before the application deadline.**
- Step 5.** Applicants will be notified in writing by the Office of Graduate Studies of the funding decisions upon completion of the review process. A copy of the notification will also be sent to the Department Chair or Program Director. If approved, the funds are generally transferred to the academic department and the students make arrangements to use these funds through individual department offices. **The proposal becomes the University’s permanent file copy and serves as a contract between you and the University, indicating that you will fulfill your obligations as outlined in this document.**
- Step 6.** **The final report is a graduation requirement.** This report must be signed by the Graduate Faculty Advisor and sent to the Department Chair or Graduate Program Director and the Office of University Graduate studies.

III. MINI-GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING GUIDELINES

A. [Attachment A: Cover Sheet](#)

1. **Title of Research, Service, or Educational Leadership Project (Self Explanatory)**
2. **Applicant Information** -- If the proposal has multiple applicants, supply complete information on all applicants, on a separate sheet.
3. **Graduate Faculty Advisor Information (Self Explanatory)**
4. **Synopsis of Proposed Project** -- Be clear, concise, and specific. Avoid jargon and undefined abbreviations. **Do not** exceed the space provided (10-point minimum font size) and **do not** submit additional information.

5. **Grant Period** -- Include expected project starting and completion dates. The earliest starting date for projects submitted in October and February are January 1 and June 1 respectively.
6. **Amount Requested** -- Enter the total amount of funding requested on Budget Summary sheet (not to exceed \$500). This must match your budget page.
7. **Compliance with Regulations** -- Please note that Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) is required of all RSEL grant recipients which can be completed on line even before submitting the proposal by following the link given below. Research grants funds will not be made available until RCR is completed. If you are funded, your research project must not commence without obtaining necessary approval, as necessary, to insure compliance with other regulations listed below:

- [Responsible Conduct of Research Program](#)
- [Human Subjects' Compliance](#) (IRB) – Institutional Review Board for the Protection of human Subjects
- [Animal Care](#) (IACUC) Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
- [Chemical & Physical Safety](#)
- [Bio-Safety](#)
- [Scientific Misconduct](#)
- [Other Compliances/Policies](#)

If you have any further questions, consult the Director of Graduate Studies in the Office of Graduate Studies, 223 Graff Main Hall (608-785-8124).

8. **Signatures** – It is your responsibility to obtain signatures of your Graduate Faculty Advisor on the Assurance Form, and to scan it with the proposal (prior to sending it electronically) to the Office of Graduate Studies, 223 Graff Main Hall. The rest of the review and approval process is completed without further action by the student.

B. [Attachment B: Project Budget Summary Sheet](#)

A maximum of \$500 may be requested through the mini-grant process. The funds requested can be used for supplies, travel to conduct research, and other expenses required for completing the project. Funds cannot be used for student wages, travel to present results of research, participant incentives, or publishing costs.

An itemized budget request must accompany each proposal (the Project Budget Summary sheet). It is very important that applicants carefully assess their needs and request funds accordingly. Applicants must relate budget items with materials or expenses discussed in the proposal narrative, (e.g., if travel funds are requested, the narrative should explain why the travel is necessary for completion of the project). Any non-consumable supplies (such as software, books etc.) become the property of the academic department at the end of the project. **Note: applicants should not include broad categories such as “miscellaneous” or “other” without proper description and justification-- they will not be considered for funding and may influence the evaluation of the proposal.** Budget entries should be rounded to the nearest dollar. The Graduate Council reserves the right to adjust budgets.

IMPORTANT! Students who receive a mini-grant must spend the award in the fiscal year that it is received. The fiscal year is June until the following early June. Each June, all grants are swept (removed from the departmental budgets), so it is assumed that funding awarded in a mini-grant will be 100% spent soon after it is received and certainly by early June. If a student knows that he/she needs funding after July 1, he or she should apply for a mini-grant after July 1.

C. Statement of Assurance

The advisor confirms that he or she has reviewed the grant application and supports the project. To do so, check the appropriate boxes of the Statement of Assurance Form, then sign and date the form.

D. Narrative (approximately two, single-sided, double-spaced pages, in no smaller than a 10-pt font): The Graduate Director must make comparisons and judgments across academic disciplines and methodologies. Proposal narratives should be directed toward a general audience and avoid the excessive use of jargon. All applicants **MUST** follow the general narrative outline provided below:

1. **Statement of the Problem/Significance of the Project.** Be succinct; clearly support your statement with documentation and references and include an up-to-date review of the relevant literature.
2. **Objective.** Discuss the specific outcome(s) and product(s) of the project. If the anticipated outcomes are quantifiable, explain how they will be measured.
3. **Research, Service, or Educational Leadership Project Methods.** Design a project plan consistent with your academic discipline. This may include scientific research in the physical or biological sciences, use of population samples, experimental and control groups, action research, or other methods of data gathering and statistical analysis. The project plan may include archival research, translations, ethnographic fieldwork, solitary thinking, or other forms of analysis and synthesis of ideas and concepts appropriate to your disciplines. A reference page with supporting sources regarding the methodology or plan of action is required of all proposals.
 - i. Research methods specifics: If this is a research proposal you must include in your methods section the measures or instruments that you will be using to conduct the study.
 - ii. Service project methods specifics: If this is a proposal for a service project, the methodology section should include: 1) the population to be served, 2) specific action steps to be taken during the project. If not explicitly stated elsewhere in this narrative, also 3) explain how your project will benefit the people and/or agency being served.
 - iii. Educational leadership methods specifics: If this is a proposal for an educational research grant, the methodology must detail how the graduate student will incorporate an action plan consistent with the purpose of the grant as outlined earlier.
4. **Detailed Budget Explanation.** Provide a detailed explanation of each budget item and explain succinctly why it is necessary for the completion of the project. Failure to provide a clear rationale for each requested item may result in reduced funding. If additional funds are required, please provide evidence of where these funds will be obtained.
5. **Final Products and Dissemination.** Describe possible forms of the final product, (e.g., publishable manuscript, conference paper, invention, software, exhibit, performance, etc.). Be specific about the methods used to disseminate your results to a wide audience, (e.g., state the target journal for publication of a manuscript, the conference for presentation of the results, or the site for a performance or exhibition).
6. **Presentation at UWL Celebration Event (Research and Creative Activity):** All grant recipients are required to present their project outcomes during the UWL Celebration of Student Research and Creativity. The celebration is usually held in April. If a student knows they will graduate mid-year, they may either present their work in progress the year before they graduate or when their work is finished the year after they graduate. It is also acceptable for another student or a faculty advisor to substitute and showcase the work in place of the student unable to attend. If neither option is possible, the student must speak to the Director of Graduate Studies concerning an exception.

E. References Cited – use a separate page

F. Appendices (include only if absolutely necessary, i.e., for additional, essential information or diagrams)

IV. FINAL REPORT

Final reports are a requirement for graduation and 1 copy is due to the Department Chair or Program Director and 1 copy is due to the office of Graduate Studies (223 Graff Main Hall) within 30 days after the activity is complete or two weeks before graduation (whichever comes first). The final report must include the Final Report Cover Sheet (provided below) and be signed by the Graduate Faculty Advisor.

Reports will vary in content and should include the following items (depending on the nature and requirements of the graduate program in which the student is enrolled).

- Title of thesis, seminar paper, or other written culminating project.
- Abstract of thesis, seminar paper, or other written culminating project.
- Titles, bylines, and abstracts of papers accepted and/or presented at professional conferences, symposia, exhibits, and performances.
- Titles, bylines, and abstracts of manuscripts accepted and/or published in journals -- include a reprint, if available.
- Synopsis of conference or workshop attended and impact related to the goals of the culminating or capstone project(s).

Acknowledgement of RSEL grant: All scholarly products resulting from the project should acknowledge funding from the Graduate Student Research, Service and Education Leadership Grant Program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in that final product.