

**FY25 Student-Led Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities (RSCA)
Program Announcement and Guidelines**

1. Overview

This award supports student-led research, scholarship, and creative activities by undergraduate (1-year awards up to \$2,000) and graduate students (up to 2-year awards, up to \$5,000) under the guidance of a faculty mentor, for example theses, dissertations, culminating applied projects and capstone projects. This program does **not** support coursework activities, projects and/or expenses that will produce items for sale and/or personal profit, or administrative tasks related to capstone/thesis/dissertation preparation (word processing, indexing, publication fees, etc.). Applications are accepted from individuals only.

The inaugural Summer 2024 competition will pilot a Student RSCA Proposal Review Committee composed of graduate students from across the University who will review proposals and make funding recommendations to the Vice Provost for Research.

Students: please discuss your project goals, project plan, and budget with your faculty mentor throughout the proposal preparation process to ensure that your mentor is informed and prepared to support you in this work.

NOTE: Bloomfield campus students must [activate and “claim” your Montclair NETID](#) and use your Montclair NETID to login to InfoReady. Similarly, Bloomfield campus mentors must use your Montclair NETID for this system.

2. Timeline

- 6/25/24 – Due date for students to submit the Project Narrative and Supporting Materials (see Sections I – II below). Applications are due by 5pm via [InfoReady](#), at which time faculty mentors will have access to all application materials and be able to upload their required components
IMPORTANT NOTE: Applicants **should share proposal drafts** with the faculty mentor during the preparation process, **prior to June 25**, so that the mentor can prepare their letter of recommendation.
- 6/30/24 – Due date for faculty mentors to submit the Letter of Support & Mentor’s CV (see Section III below). These items must be submitted via InfoReady by 11:59pm.
- 9/5/24 – Due date for Proposal Review Committee to make its funding recommendations to the Vice Provost for Research.
- If awarded, the project period will be 10/1/24 - 6/30/25 for projects granted a one-year award OR 10/1/24 - 6/30/26 for projects granted a two-year award.

3. Student Applicant Eligibility Requirements

- Undergraduate student applicants must have successfully completed at least 60 credits of coursework at the time of application.
- Graduate student applicants must have successfully completed 9 credits of degree program coursework at the time of application.
- The applicant must be in academic good standing (cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher for undergraduate students; cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for graduate students) at the time of application.
- Applications are prepared and submitted by the student. The student applicant must be intellectually involved in the project design, application preparation, execution of the project, and dissemination of the results.
- Awardees must be enrolled in program coursework at the time the award is made, and remain enrolled for the duration of the award.

4. Faculty Mentor Eligibility Requirements

- Mentors must be full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members of either the Montclair or Bloomfield campus.

5. Allowable Costs

Allowable costs generally include spend categories used for external awards, including but not limited to student hourly salary during the academic year and/or summer months (up to \$2,000 maximum for salary for the project period); the student's project-related travel expenses; materials and supplies; human subjects incentives; and/or project-related services and fees such as consulting, computing services, laboratory user fees, transcription, etc.

NOTE:

- Hourly worker salary is subject to Human Resource's [Compensation Guidelines](#).
- Graduate students who are supported as graduate assistants or doctoral assistants are subject to University rules concerning additional salary earned during the GA/DA contract period.

6. Prohibited Expenses

Prohibited expenses include but are not limited to computers/laptops, capital equipment, catering, stipends for Montclair employees, mentor travel expenses, honoraria, tuition, subawards, and any cost listed as unallowable in the Office of Sponsored Programs' [Sponsored Programs Handbook](#).

7. Application Format

- Items A-I listed below (Project Narrative, References, Budget, and Student's CV) must be assembled into **one single PDF file**.
- Items A-F comprise the Project Narrative, which is limited to **5 pages maximum**.
- Item G, References Cited, is limited to **1 page maximum**.
- Item H, the Student's biographical sketch, is limited to **2 pages maximum**.

- Item I, the Budget Table and Budget narrative, must use the template provided.
- Use 1-inch page margins for all components.
- Use 12-point font for all components.

Applications that fail to follow these instructions will be returned without review.

8. Application Components

I. **Cover Sheet** - to be completed within InfoReady

II. **Project Narrative and Supporting Materials**

A. Specific Aims

Provide a high-level overview of the goals and objectives to be addressed by the proposed project. Explain WHAT you intend to accomplish and WHY it is important. WHY does this project need to be done?

B. Background and Significance

Explain how this project builds upon previous work in order to advance your discipline, i.e., what has been done before and what additions or improvements will result from your work? For example, is your project addressing a knowledge gap in the discipline? Are you addressing an unanswered problem or challenge in your discipline? What new data, knowledge, and or creative content will this project add to your discipline, and why is it important to do so? Applicants are strongly encouraged to write the background and significance in plain language such that it is understandable to a non-specialist.

C. Project Plan

- Describe HOW the project will be conducted. This may include:
 - Describing your study areas/field sites and why they were chosen
 - Explaining your data collection and data analysis methods and procedures, for example use of research instrumentation, computer modeling, image processing, conducting interviews, administering surveys, leading focus groups, analyzing case studies, conducting data mining from a library, collection, internet sites, or database, conducting statistical analysis, leading rehearsals, preparing an exhibition, etc.
 - Creative process to be implemented
- Explain how methods and tools utilized and the information generated will be applied to accomplish the specific aims.
- Project Timeline: How much time is required to complete the project components? By what stage in the project (for example, 1st month? 1st quarter? 1st half? etc.) do you anticipate completing each major project component?

D. Preliminary results

If available, the inclusion of preliminary results is encouraged to demonstrate project feasibility and the current status of the project.

E. Anticipated outcomes and impacts

Describe the anticipated outcomes and the impact of the proposed work on your discipline if the project is successful, and the impacts of the project more broadly for the applicant and the broader community.

F. Plan for dissemination of project results

Describe the anticipated plans to present the project results in an appropriate venue, for example at a professional conference, via publication, via a performance or exhibition, etc.

G. References Cited (1-page max, separate from Project Narrative 5-page limit)

H. Student's Biographical Sketch (2-pages max, separate from Project Narrative 5-page limit)

I. Budget Table and Narrative

Using the template provided, offer clear and concise descriptions of the amount requested in each category, the proposed use of funds requested in each budget category, and how the expenditure supports the specific aims.

III. Faculty Mentor Application Components – After the student applicant submits their proposal in the InfoReady system, the proposal will then route to the faculty mentor to complete these required components. **The following two (2) components should be combined into one single PDF. Failure to submit these documents will render the application incomplete and returned without review.**

A. Faculty Mentor Letter of Reference (2 pages maximum)

The Faculty mentor letter of reference should clearly address the following:

- The mentor's name and role at the University
- How long have you worked with the applicant and in what capacities?
- An assessment of the student's preparation and ability to implement the proposed project.
- A description of the student's unique contributions to the proposed project, both current and anticipated.
- The mentor's plan to oversee and support this project and contribute to student's success.
- Are there any other current or pending sources of support available for this project?

Faculty mentors are reminded that the proposal review committee will be comprised of advanced graduate students from across the University.

B. Faculty Mentor CV (2 pages maximum)

C. Faculty Mentor Certification

In addition, faculty mentors will be required to agree to the following attestations within the InfoReady system:

1. *I have read and I support the student's proposal and budget. I agree to serve as the project mentor according to the mentoring plan provided, and serve as liaison for internal university financial processes (such as verifying worked hours for hourly compensation, assisting the student with obtaining quotes and verifying receipt of goods and services, etc.). As mentor, I will ensure that the project is conducted responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with all applicable University and external guidelines and policies, and ensure submission of the project final report to the Office of Sponsored Programs.*
2. *I certify that the student is in academic good standing and has completed the required number of coursework credits (at least 60 credits for an undergraduate students, or 9 credits for a graduate student) as of today's date.*
3. *I certify that the student has been intellectually involved in the project design and application preparation. If selected for funding, the student will lead the project implementation and be involved in the dissemination of the results.*

9. Evaluation Criteria

A. Project significance and potential impacts

- Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the discipline?
- Does the proposal explain how this project makes new and original contributions to the discipline?

B. Project Design

- What are the project's strengths and weaknesses?
- Are the project strategy and methods appropriate to accomplish the specific aims and project goals?
- Does the proposal explain how the data to be collected/information generated/activities to be conducted will be applied to accomplish the specific aims and project goals?
- Is the project timeline reasonable and realistic for completing the activities described?

C. Project Outcomes

- Does the proposal explain the anticipated outcomes and the impact of the proposed work?

- Does the proposal include a plan to communicate/share project results in an appropriate venue?

D. Applicant's preparation to conduct the project

- Does the proposal convey that the applicant is well prepared to conduct the proposed work?
- Has the faculty mentor presented a thoughtful plan to support and contribute to student's success?

E. Project Budget

- Is the budget reasonable and appropriate for the proposed activities?
- Does the budget demonstrate an optimal use of the requested funds?

As part of the Office of Research's commitment to promote research, scholarship, and creative activities throughout the University, the Student RSCA Proposal Review Committee and Vice Provost for Research may also consider the distribution of awards amongst University Colleges and Schools, and how the funding recommendations promote equity and inclusion.

10. Award Requirements

- Projects selected for funding will be reviewed by the Office of Research Compliance and Regulatory Programs prior to finalizing the award to ensure compliance with all compliance committees and export control regulations.
- The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) serves as the cost center manager for funded awards and will review and approve all financial transactions and requests for budget modifications.
- Funded student-mentor teams agree to:
 1. Abide by all program guidelines and requirements;
 2. Submit a final report of project activities to the Office of Sponsored Programs within 30 days of the grant end date.
- Awards will conclude at the end of the project period (6/30/25 or 6/30/26) OR upon the awardee's graduation or departure from the University.
- Unused balances are NOT transferrable to other students or to the faculty member.

Award recipients and mentors who fail to meet the requirements of this internal grant are ineligible to apply for new Office of Research grants until all requirements are fulfilled.

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Budget Template

	Applicant's Request
Monetary Expenditure Request	
Student salary: # of hrs per week x \$ rate per hr x# of weeks (note: use HR salary guide to determine hourly wage)	\$
Travel: airfare, lodging, per diem, mileage, etc.	\$
Materials/Supplies	\$
Services/Fees	\$
Consultants	\$
Other Costs: please itemize	\$
Total (maximum amount that can be requested is \$2,000 for an undergraduate student project or \$5,000 for a two-year, graduate student project)	\$

Budget Narrative

Use the space below (and the next page if needed) to provide a description of each of the costs listed above. **The budget table and narrative are limited to 2 pages.**