

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PLAN

VCU Quest Fund FY 2024 Request for Applications

Purpose: The goal of the VCU Quest Fund (Quest, formerly the VCU Presidential Research Quest Fund) is to afford all faculty an internal funding opportunity to support new, emerging, or continuing research. Research proposals that advance any discipline and area of research focus are appropriate for consideration. Requests for grant support may be based on a broad array of needs, from restarting an inactive research program to pilot studies that would produce preliminary results on which external grant applications could be based. Proposed work that helps advance transdisciplinary research, multidisciplinary research, and cross-campus collaboration, as well as research that has the potential for translation to practice or market, is especially encouraged.

VCU Quest Fund At-A-Glance *(additional details below)*

Full Proposal Deadline	April 15, 2024
Award Start Date and Project Period	July 1, 2024, 18 months
Award Ceiling	Up to \$50,000, inclusive of 25% unit cost share (required)
Funds Release	Funds are released in annual increments in accordance with the proposed budget. Year 2 funds are released following a successful mid-term report.
Program Category	Pilot/small project, funds for part of a larger project.
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research designed for impact in alignment with the VCU Research Strategic Priorities Plan and carried out by one or more PIs. While transdisciplinary teams are encouraged, it is not required for Quest Fund eligibility. • PIs may be any <u>full-time, primary appointment</u> VCU faculty, research faculty or clinician researcher regardless of rank or tenure status, whose appointments are approved by the dean of their college or school. Clinician researchers must have a university faculty appointment to serve as a PI. • Staff without affiliate college/school faculty appointments are not eligible to be a PI. • Inclusive research teams encompassing meaningful participation of all members are strongly encouraged, including URM and/or minoritized faculty, early-stage investigators, trainees, and students. • Projects must demonstrate alignment with a research strategic plan initiative, along with specific goal(s) and objective(s) identified in the One VCU Research Strategic Priorities Plan. • Faculty receiving a grant from the Presidential Research Quest fund or VCU Quest Fund as either a PI or Co-PI must delay subsequent applications to the Quest for a specified time depending on their rank. Early-stage (pre-tenure) faculty may submit a second proposal three years from the termination date of their first award. Senior faculty (tenured) are required to wait four years from the termination date of their first award. • No faculty member may receive more than two Quest awards in a 10-year period.

Full proposal deadline: Application packages should be submitted via RAMS-SPOT Internal Opportunities here: [Quest Grant OP00000586](#) no later than **5pm (ET), April 15, 2024**. You will receive a confirmation email upon receipt. **Applications cannot be accepted after the deadline for any reason.**

Format: Applications must use [this template](#). Text must be single spaced, Arial, 11-point (minimum) font. The template margins should not be altered. Proposals not following the format requirements will be returned without review. Once complete, **the template and any supporting documents must be converted to a single PDF file for upload.**

Forms for submission:

- [VCU Quest Application](#)
- [Biosketch Form](#)

Budget guidelines: All requested costs directly related to the project should be listed and justified in the budget section of the Quest Application Template. Facilities and administrative (F&A or indirect) costs are not allowed. **Budgets require approval from applicable chairs (or their designees) and deans before submission in RAMS-SPOT. Please allow adequate time for approval routing.** See the Budgeting Guide below for additional information about eligible and ineligible costs.

VCU Quest Fund Budgeting Guide

CATEGORY	ELIGIBLE COSTS	INELIGIBLE COSTS
Salary support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary support, including fringe benefits, for PI(s) and co-investigators, collectively not to exceed 20% of total project costs (i.e., if the total project budget is \$50,000, the collective PI/co-I salaries and fringe cannot exceed \$10,000 total). • Salary support, including fringe benefits, for project staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary support for administrative personnel or 12-month UAP or executive personnel.
Equipment and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research/project supplies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office equipment and supplies (including faculty computers, laptops, and tablets unless strictly related to project).
Student costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate, graduate student, and postdoctoral stipends, if relevant to the project, with a detailed justification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition other than graduate student tuition.
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential travel related to the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel not strictly related to the project.
Other costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant fees. • Other expenses (i.e., laboratory and shared core facilities/resource fees). • Consultant costs. • Equipment/technology critical to the project. (Requests over \$5,000 must include a detailed justification.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional organization dues or membership fees. • Sub-contracts to institutions or salary support for individuals external to VCU. • Pre-award costs.

Review process: The submission, review, and funding process are coordinated by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation. There are three levels of review: 1) school- and college- level review and ranking with recommendations, 2) review of level one recommendations by the Research Development Advisory Council (ReDAC), consisting of the associate deans for research from each school and college, and

3) final decision on ReDAC recommendations by the VPRI. Multi-investigator proposals will undergo initial review in all units from which cost share funds are requested. The number of proposals recommended for funding is dependent upon available funds.

While each school/college/relevant unit will establish its own review process, proposals are assessed in the following areas:

- Merit, including scholarly merit, impact on the field of study, and feasibility (budget and timeline).
- Broader impacts, including translational potential and potential for high return on investment.
- Relation to Strategic Research Priorities Plan, including specific potential for a project to further the goals and objectives identified.
- Team, including PI(s) preparedness, transdisciplinary qualities, and diversity (meaningful participation of trainees, students, URM and/or minoritized faculty and early-stage investigators as well as cross-campus collaboration).
- Additional school/college criteria as relevant.

Award and reporting process: The project start date is July 1, 2024 and the award period is 18 months. Funds will be released in annual increments in accordance with the proposed budget. Year 2 funds will be released following a successful one-year report documenting meaningful progress toward fulfillment of the project aims/goals. Progress should include evidence that the applicants have met with a relevant program officer/director from the planned funding agency if such a meeting is allowed by the agency. The Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI) and ReDAC members will review progress in comparison to budget utilization and project milestones based on the initial project proposal. The remaining funds will only be released following approval from the VPRI. A final project report including an accounting of all funds expended, a summary of work completed, and progress on sustainability plans will be required 30 days after the project end date.

Additional requirements for all Quest Fund awards:

- Projects must have documented compliance approvals (e.g., IRB, IACUC), as applicable and appropriate, secured before work may begin.
- The principal investigator(s) will be required to participate in an annual survey of results and outcomes (e.g., external grants submissions and awards, publications, creative work, intellectual property, etc.) associated with their fund-sponsored research. Participation will begin one year after the project end date and continue annually for a total of three years.
- All publications, presentations, etc., resulting from the project must acknowledge financial support from the VCU Quest Fund.
- Projects are expected to be completed within the specific budget period. If an extenuating circumstance should be considered for a no-cost extension, the PI(s) will be expected to fully justify the request in writing. Extensions are at the sole discretion of the VPRI and applicable deans, and there is no guarantee that the extension will be approved.

Questions: For specific questions about proposal budgets, cost-share commitments, school/college level review and endorsement signatures contact your [Associate Dean for Research](#). All other questions may be directed to ovprifunds@vcu.edu.