

Research Award Application Rules and Guidelines

The following are rules and guidelines concerning GRAC Research Award applications. Failure to follow any rules or guidelines may result in disqualification of the application without peer review, at the GRAC chairpeoples' discretion. A separate set of rules and guidelines for travel awards is available on the GRAC page of the UNM Biology Graduate Student Association's website.

GRAC applications are reviewed by the GRAC chairpeople and a minimum of three and a target of four reviewers from various sub-disciplines in biology. Please write your proposal to communicate with a broad biology audience. It is recommended that you review the scoring criteria at the end of this document before completing your application. For examples of previously funded proposals see the GRAC website: <http://bgsa.unm.edu/Funding/graduate-research-allocations-committee.html>

General Rules

GRAC funding caps: Research Awards are for the amount of \$400. The amount designated by the GRAC chairs at the start of the semester is the maximum amount that can be requested. Applicants will be notified in advance of the application deadline if award amounts are increased. No partial awards will be given. **The lifetime limit of GRAC research allocations shall be 2 awards (MS) and 4 awards (PhD).**

Funding period: Funds may only be requested for the current funding period. Although you may describe a larger project in your application proposal, you must clearly indicate on the application form, in your proposal body, and in your itemized budget the items for which you are requesting funding and when these items will be used.

Fall funding period: May 2026 - December 2026

Spring funding period: September 2026 - August 2027

Anonymous application material: The required PDF of application material (described below) must be anonymous. Anonymous material should contain no identifying information such as names, telephone numbers, email addresses, NSF grant numbers, or lab affiliations. When necessary, substitute "APPLICANT" or "APPLICANT'S ADVISOR" in place of identifying names. Citations do not need to be anonymized unless language specifies that you contributed to the reference.

Application deadline: **All requested materials must be received by the application deadline at 11:59 PM.** Application materials can be re-submitted as many times as necessary until the application deadline. The last version sent closest to the deadline will be the one that is accepted and reviewed.

Successfully funded applications: The UNM Biology Graduate Student Association should be acknowledged for complete or partial funding in all publications resulting from funded projects.

Grant recipient follow-up: A follow-up may be sent one year after any reward for a project update. This update may be posted to the BGSa website pending applicant approval.

Application

In order to submit a complete application, you must:

1. Complete the online GRAC Research Application Form
2. Email one anonymous PDF to the GRAC chairpersons that includes:
 - a. Proposal body
 - b. Literature cited
 - c. Budget
 - d. Statement of previous use of GRAC funds
3. Email Animal Care and Use protocol approval, if required for your research, to the GRAC chairpersons. This item must be emailed separately from the anonymous PDF.

Section Guidelines

Proposal Body: The proposal body can be **no longer than three pages, double-spaced**, with 1 inch margins, and with a font no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman. Figures and in text citations are included in the total length of the proposal body. The applicant should explicitly state how the proposed research is related to their degree work, if applicable.

Literature Cited: The literature cited section must use a consistent citation format from a prominent journal in your field. This section **does not count toward your 3-page proposal limit**.

Budget: The budget must be **no longer than one page**. Expenditures should be itemized, and funding sources for each item should be clearly indicated. **A budget justification paragraph must also be included**. Specify for which items you are requesting GRAC funding. Include explicit information on funding you have requested elsewhere, including funding that has been received, applied for, or will be applied for in the current funding period. Write out the full name of the funding source and indicate if the award is pending or accepted. Rejected funding need not be included. **GRAC Research awards do NOT fund lodging, food, or publication costs.**

Previous Use of GRAC Research Funds: **If you have not previously applied to or been awarded GRAC Research funds, you must state so at the top of the budget.** If you have received GRAC Research funding in any previous semester, **you must include a separate page explaining how you spent the money and the status of your project**, including citations of any resulting publications or presentations. If you include citations, anonymize them as such, with brackets being filled in with relevant information and co-authors not being listed: AUTHOR'S NAME et al. [Year], [Journal/Conference name]

Animal Care and Use Page: If your work involves vertebrate animals or vertebrate animal tissue, excluding tissues from museum collections, **an animal care and use protocol is required**. If a protocol is not required, a **statement specifying that you do not need an animal care and use protocol with justification must be included**. If your work does require an approved animal care and use protocol, you must submit your approval letter (supplied by IACUC; should include your or your PI's name and an approval number). If it appears that your application should have a protocol and it does not, your application may be rejected.

Mileage Reimbursement: Mileage costs should be based on mileage rates found in the University Policies and Procedures Manual (<https://ua.unm.edu/travel/mileage-rate.html>).

Other things to keep in mind: Non-expendable equipment purchased with GRAC allocations shall remain the property of GRAC. **GRAC should be acknowledged for funding in all publications resulting from projects funded by GRAC.**

Review Criteria

Below are the ten criteria assessed by GRAC chairpersons for proposal acceptance and fairness. Research Award applicants should make sure that their proposals meet all the listed criteria so that the application can be accepted and the proposal passed on for peer review.

GRAC Chair Score Sheet (20 possible points)

Failure to comply with the below criteria will result in an immediate rejection.

- Fully completed online application submission form
- Proposal emailed before application deadline
- Application fully anonymized (e.g. removed name, advisor name, student ID, etc.)
- Research conducted falls within award period
- Application is formatted properly and within page limit
- Budget justification paragraph included
- Copy of completed registration form, if applicable
- Previous use of GRAC funds statement included, if applicable
- Animal Care and Use page or statement, if applicable

If the applicant has complied with the above criteria the selection committee will award points based on the criteria below:

- Has the applicant applied to other funding sources? If yes, **10 pts.**
- Did this project receive funds in the prior semester? If no, **10 pts.**

Reviewer Score Sheet (45 possible points)

Below are the nine major parts that are peer reviewed for each GRAC Research proposal. Research Award applicants should review this scoresheet when writing their proposals.

- **Organization:** Consider the layout, formatting, and content organization of the proposal body, budget, and literature cited pages. **(1-5 pts)**
- **Introduction/Background/Objectives:** Provide clear, concise introduction to the proposed study, describing previous work done in the field. Clearly state questions of the study and specific objectives of planned work during the funding period. **(1-5 pts)**
- **Methods:** Clearly describe the methodology of the study. Make sure to pay special attention to the proposed methods and materials the GRAC funds are being requested for, if applicable. **(1-5 pts)**
- **Significance/Relevance:** Explain the significance and relevance of the study to the applicable scientific field and degree program. **(1-5 pts)**
- **Clear/concise:** Consider the readability of the writing itself. Is the proposal well written? **(1-5 pts)**
- **Grammar/spelling:** A score of 5 should be used for proposals that are free from misspellings and grammatical errors. Points are deducted as errors occur. **(1-5 pts)**
- **Itemized budget:** Make sure to describe how the requested funds will be used and justify their importance. **(1-5 pts)**
- Explicit statement of how proposed research project is related to degree work included? **(5 pts)**

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Graduate Research Allocations Committee (GRAC) 2026-2027**

- **Previous use of GRAC funds:** Make sure to include a statement even if you have not received or applied for GRAC funds prior. If awarded, explain how funds were used to progress project goals. **(1-5 pts)**

If you have any questions pertaining to the GRAC application process please reach out to your GRAC chair(s).