

SPARC Graduate Research Grant

Support to **P**romote **A**dvancement of **R**esearch and **C**reativity

Fall 2022 **SPARC** Application: Guidelines for Faculty Mentors

Application Due Date:

Wednesday, October 12, 2022 by 5:00 pm

Required Documents and Submission in USCeRA

Faculty mentors serving as the PI on a SPARC grant are responsible for

- signing the Authorship and GPA Certification Form
- writing a **one-page** letter of recommendation which adheres to the guidelines below
- submitting the SPARC proposal application in USCeRA by the deadline above

Faculty mentors may sponsor only two student SPARC applications per year (i.e. only two students per faculty mentor may apply for SPARC each year). Faculty mentors may not circumvent this rule by sponsoring two students and then having other faculty mentors sponsor additional students for whom they are the primary doctoral advisor.

AUTHORSHIP AND GPA CERTIFICATION FORM

By signing this form, you are confirming that the student was the primary author of the proposal and that the GPA listed on the form is accurate as of the date of submission for the student's current degree program.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE FACULTY LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of Recommendation must be written by a current UofSC faculty member. The SPARC PI is normally the student's primary advisor for their dissertation, but exceptions to this are possible – please see situations

requiring additional documentation below. Letters of Recommendation written by former UofSC faculty members who are no longer employed by the university will not be accepted.

Letters of Recommendation must be no longer than **one page** and submitted on faculty or department letterhead. Letters which are very general and/or vague are not helpful to the review committee. The review committee has requested that Letters of Recommendation address the bulleted topics listed below. Each proposal should include only one Letter of Recommendation.

- The letter should include the following:
 - How long you have known the student
 - Student's anticipated graduation date
 - Evaluate the student's degree of independence, both generally and specifically in the preparation of this proposal
 - Assess student's intellectual ability, creativity, and critical thinking skills
 - Assess feasibility of project completion based on student's degree of preparation and motivation
 - Discuss the significance of this funding for the student's dissertation or thesis, i.e. how will this project impact the student's progress towards degree completion
 - Any other information of which the committee should be aware

- Please give **one** of the following overall ratings of the student for a SPARC Graduate Research Grant
 - Very Strongly Recommend
 - Recommend with Confidence
 - Recommend with Reservations
 - Do Not Recommend

- Save as PDF or MS Word file and append to the end of student's proposal.
- Save entire proposal package as **one** PDF or Word document file.
- The document file must be named with the following convention:
Student last name_first initial (Example: Doe_J)

Situations Requiring Additional Documentation

❖ **Student's Primary Advisor is not the SPARC PI**

The Faculty Advisor on the proposal should be the student's Primary Advisor for their dissertation or thesis. If a student wishes to have a UofSC faculty member other than their Primary Advisor as the Faculty Advisor (and PI in USCeRA) for this grant, the application must include a letter of support from the student's Primary Advisor stating approval for another faculty member to serve as the Faculty Advisor for the SPARC grant. Alternatively, the student's dissertation or thesis committee may approve the appointment of a UofSC Faculty Advisor who is not the Primary Advisor. In this case, the application must include a letter of support from the Chair of the Dissertation or Thesis Committee stating the committee's approval for a faculty member other than the Primary Advisor to serve as Faculty Advisor (and PI in USCeRA) for this grant. When submitting the SPARC Graduate Research Grant proposal, this letter of support should be appended to the proposal and should appear after the Faculty Letter of Recommendation.

❖ **Student Requests Funds to Attend a Short Course**

The student may request funds to cover the expenses related to a short course; HOWEVER, the Faculty Advisor must state in the Letter of Recommendation that 1) the course is essential to the student's research project and 2) that the course will help advance the dissertation/thesis research.

❖ **Student requests funds to use resources, equipment, facilities, etc. not directly available through Advisor; these may or may not be affiliated UofSC**

The Faculty Advisor should state in the Letter of Recommendation that 1) such training is necessary for the development of the proposed work, and 2) the Faculty Advisor has spoken with the Facility Manager or Director, and that this Manager or Director has agreed to train the student and/or to allow the student to use/access.

SUBMITTING THE SPARC PROPOSAL IN USCeRA:

- **Faculty Advisor writes one-page Letter of Recommendation.**
 - **Attach the completed Faculty Letter of Recommendation to the end of student's proposal.**
- This should create **ONE document (PDF or MS Word)** containing the following documents **in this order:**
- i. Resubmission narrative (only if resubmitting)
 - ii. Reviewer comments from previous submission (only if resubmitting)
 - iii. Proposal Narrative (3-page max; if not a resubmission, the narrative is the first part of the package)
 - iv. Bibliography (2-page max)
 - v. Budget Form
 - vi. Current and Pending Support Form
 - vii. Biographical Sketch (2-page max)
 - viii. Authorship and GPA Certification Form
 - ix. Letter of Support for Participant Incentives (required if requesting participant incentives)
 - x. Optional Letter(s) of Support from special collaborators, resource agreements, etc. (see student application guidelines)
 - xi. Letter of Recommendation from faculty advisor (required for all proposals)
 - xii. IF UofSC FACULTY MEMBER OTHER THAN STUDENT'S PRIMARY ADVISOR IS ACTING AS FACULTY ADVISOR FOR ADMINISTRATION OF THE SPARC GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT, a Letter of Support from the student's Primary Advisor or the Chair of the Thesis/Dissertation Committee must follow the Faculty Letter of Recommendation.
- **This application file must be named:** Student last name_first initial (example: Smith_J)
- **Please do not scan the entire proposal. Proposals may be submitted as MS Word or PDF documents.**
- **If you cannot combine the documents,** please contact Julie Morris at jmorris@sc.edu for help.

Login in to USCeRA (<https://sam.research.sc.edu/uscera/>).

Use your university username and password to log into USCeRA.

Create New Proposal - Proposal / Award Processing Form (PAP)

- On the top of the top of main USCeRA page, in the garnet area, select “Proposals”
- From the dropdown menu, click on “+Create New Proposal.” This will take you to the “Create New Proposal” page
- Complete the fields as follows (this will become part of the Proposal Summary):

Basic Information

1. **Title:** **Proposal title in USCeRA must follow this format (Please do not write the title in all caps.):**
 SPARC: Student Full Name: Proposal Title
 Example: SPARC: Sue Smith: The many ways that research at UofSC is the best
The title in USCeRA must follow this format exactly so that proposals can be found and sorted in USCeRA based on the student’s name and association with SPARC.
2. **Primary Awardee Department:** should fill automatically with your department; if there is a problem, please email Julie Morris (jmorris@sc.edu)
 - Please note, SPARC funds follow the faculty mentor’s home department listed in USCeRA. If a faculty member has a dual appointment, the “Primary Awardee Department” can be changed using the dropdown on the PAP (Proposal Award Processing) Form in USCeRA and choose the appropriate department.
3. **Type:** Select New (if a new proposal) or Revision (if the proposal was previously submitted to the SPARC Program and revised for this round)
4. **Grants.gov Workspace ID:** leave this blank
5. **Start Date:** May 1 of next year
6. **End Date:** July 31 of the *following year (or student’s anticipated graduation if prior to this date)*
7. **Agency deadline:** *enter due date and select – Receipt*

Click on the green “Continue” button

New Proposal: “SPARC: Student name: Title of proposal” is now at top of page

Source of Project and Sponsor

1. **Is this an internal Request?**
 Select “Yes”
 - a. **Internal Request Office**
 Select Vice President for Research
 - i. **Internal Request Type**
 Select SPARC Graduate Research Grant*

* if “SPARC” is not an option, please contact me immediately as you will be unable to submit:
jmorris@sc.edu or 803-563-8376.

Questions 2-4 Sponsor information should automatically populate the form

Click on the green “Continue” button

Personnel

+Add Personnel: leave blank unless there are UofSC faculty/staff who will be collaborating on this project (do not add the student’s name here – this information is added in the +Add Student section)

SPARC Graduate Research Grant Students

+Add Student: *this will open a pop up box*

➤ enter student first name, last name, email address* and department

*Please enter the student’s university email address - this is the email address used to send reviewer comments and program information to your student. **Please double-check and ensure the student’s email address is entered correctly** – *this is the only email we will have for contacting your student.*

Click green “Continue” button - this will save the student’s information, close the pop up, and bring you back to the main Personnel page.

Please review the student’s information to confirm that it saved in the system. If it did not, continue with the submission and email the information to me directly at jmorris@sc.edu – I can add it in on the admin side. *Thank you!*

Click green “Continue” button

Costs

Project Costs

1. Amount Requested for First or Current Year

Enter the amount requested, up to \$5000. Do not enter a number higher than \$5000 or the proposal will be disapproved.

2. Project Years

Enter “1”

3. Total Amount Requested for All Project Years

Enter the amount requested, up to \$5000. **Do not enter a number higher than \$5000 or the proposal will be disapproved.**

Click green “Continue” button

? Questions

General Questions

Questions: *Answer yes/no as appropriate - you must answer all questions.*

EXCEPTIONS: See below for Cost Share, Human Subjects, or Vertebrate Animal Usage

Cost Share in Proposal (i.e. matching funds)? Select No.

Matching funds are not allowed.

Human Subjects? If TRUE, select YES (approval is not required for submission)

Select YES even if you do not yet have IRB approval.

An Approval # text box will appear. If you have a number already for this project, enter the number. If you do not have a number but will apply for approval, write “pending”

Vertebrate animals? If TRUE, select YES (approval is not required for submission)

Select Yes even if you do not yet have Animal Use Approval.

An Approval # text box will appear. If you have a number already for this project, enter the number and Approval Date as prompted. If you do not have a number but will apply for approval, write “pending”. Leave Approval Date blank if pending.

Click green “Continue” button

Congratulations, the Proposal/Award Processing Form (PAP) form is saved and complete. You should now be brought to the “Proposal Summary” page. Next step...

Internal Commit Form:

On the Proposal Summary page, scroll down, under the section My Forms (left side of page), click on **Internal Commit**

NOTE: This form indicates a proposal is REQUESTING funds from UofSC (an internal funding source), which includes the SPARC Graduate Research Grant program. It does NOT indicate a need for cost-sharing from your department or college.

In the text box beside **Year 1**, enter the total amount requested for the SPARC Grant award (max of \$5000). Do not enter a number higher than \$5000 or the proposal will be disapproved.

All other squares and boxes should be blank. Total will auto-fill.


Scroll to the bottom of the page and click <SAVE>.

This will bring you back to the “Proposal Summary” page and the Internal Commit form under My Forms will now have a status of **✓Complete**.







NOTE: Under the My Forms section, if you see “Administrative Information,” please leave as is – do not change or edit. This may not be present, but is so, may show as complete or incomplete. A status of incomplete will NOT affect the submission.

Upload the SPARC Graduate Research Grant proposal:


NOTE: **please submit as ONE word or PDF document.** Do not scan. Do not submit separate files. Please contact me (Julie Morris, jmorris@sc.edu, 803-563-8376) if you are having problems or need assistance.


- On the lower right side of the “Proposal Summary” page, there is an “Uploaded Documents” section (to the right of “All Forms”)
- Click on “ Upload Document”. This will bring you to a new page.
- **Under “Category,” select “Other.”** This allows you to upload the SPARC proposal as one document (**please do not upload several separate documents**).
- Under “New Upload,” Click on “Choose File.” This will open a pop-up.
- In the pop-up box, select the student’s proposal from where it is saved in your computer or USB drive.
- Click on “Open.”
- The name of the student’s file will appear to the right of “Choose File.”
- Click on the red “Upload” button.
- This should take you back to the Proposal Summary page and the file will now be listed under “Uploaded Documents”.

NOTE: If the upload takes longer than a minute to process – something is wrong, try again or call me (803-563-8376). I will ask you to email the proposal to me at jmorris@sc.edu and will upload it for you.

Lead PI  Dr. Lauren Clark Current & Pending Office Research - General	Tools  Audit Trail  Add Note  Delete This Proposal  Post Sponsor Revision  Print Cover Page
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Students
Amy Jones Biological Sciences

Uploaded Documents	
Jones_A.pdf Other Dr. Lauren Clark	 Delete 30.6 KB 08/19/2020

 For external proposal submissions please upload the following documents, as well as any other necessary support documents:

- Proposal/Proposal Summary
- Budget/Budget Justification

 Upload Document

Start the approval process:

At this point, everything should be ready (*See screen capture below*): 1) Student name listed; 2) under My Forms, both the Proposal Award Processing and Internal Commit Forms should have a status of “Complete;” and 3) the proposal should be listed under “Uploaded Documents.”

Title

"SPARC: Jane Smith: Seasonal Nutrient Cycling in Charleston Harbor, SC"

Project	Lead PI	Tools
Status Not Submitted	Dr. Lauren Clark Current & Pending Office Research - General	Audit Trail Add Note Delete This Proposal Post Sponsor Revision Print Cover Page
Type New Dates 05/01/2021 - 07/31/2022 Awardee Department Biological Sciences Internal Request Type SPARC Graduate Research Grant	Students Amy Jones Biological Sciences	
<div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">▶ Start Approval Process</div>	Uploaded Documents Jones_A.pdf Delete Other 30.6 KB Dr. Lauren Clark 08/19/2020	
My Forms Administrative Information ✓ Complete USC/SCRF USC Grant/Contract Grant Proposal/Award Processing Form (PAP) ✓ Complete <div style="background-color: #808080; color: white; padding: 2px;">View Report ▶</div> Internal Commit ✓ Complete	<div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 10px;"> ⓘ For external proposal submissions please upload the following documents, as well as any other necessary support documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal/Proposal Summary • Budget/Budget Justification </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <input type="button" value="Upload Document"/> </div>	

Select the red "Start Approval Process" button above the "My Forms" box.

- A Confirm Proposal Submission pop-up will appear that says "Are you sure..."
 - Click on "Submit Proposal."
 - A note will appear at the top of your USCeRA main page stating that the proposal has been successfully submitted with a proposal number listed.
- Please note that the 5pm requirement on the deadline date is for submission of the completed application/proposal INTO USCeRA (=clicking on the "Start approval process" button).
- Electronic signatures from the Chair and Dean can occur later. They are notified automatically by the system of pending applications.

If you do not receive a proposal number from USCeRA, please call at 803-563-8376.