Ohio University Innovation Strategy

Request for Proposals FY16

Summary of Changes (May 21, 2015) for Pre-Proposals and Full Proposals:

• Applicants must use one of the following fonts: Arial, Helvetica, Palantino Linotype, Georgia, Times New Roman, or Computer Modern (for TeX users).
• Applications should have the title and PI listed in the header or footer.
• Applications must be submitted by the deadline (LEO approvals can be finalized after the deadline).
• Applications must be uploaded to the Innovation Strategy module within LEO.
• The budget and justification are not included within the stated page limit.

RFP changes are shown in Red

Letter of Intent Deadline: May 11, 2015
Pre-Proposal Deadline: July 13, 2015

Program description: The Ohio University Innovation Strategy (OUIS) provides funding to support interdisciplinary/multi-planning unit team projects. These projects must advance innovation in areas drawn from an identified set of focused niches (see Appendix I for list of niches). Activities that can be supported by an OUIS grant include research, scholarship, creative activity, instruction, and institutional operations.

The structure of this RFP is intended to incentivize collaborations that are interdisciplinary and that span across college and planning unit boundaries. This goal reflects the fact that these challenges very often benefit from interdisciplinary approaches. This program should not be interpreted as a devaluation of traditional disciplinary work, but rather an effort to leverage the university’s full spectrum of assets and address an underdeveloped mode of collaborative engagement.

Who can apply: Faculty and staff at any Ohio University campus are eligible to participate as a Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Investigator (Co-I). Proposals must be submitted by PI/Co-I teams that are interdisciplinary and drawn from more than one planning unit. For faculty: your planning unit is your college (or school in the case of the Voinovich School) or regional campus. A single individual should be identified as the PI.

Co-Is outside Ohio University. Projects in partnership with individuals or organizations outside the university are encouraged if the partnership enhances the value of the proposed activity. Funding can be allocated to external partners under this program but will require a high level of justification. An individual external to the university whose participation is integral to the project, and who has the capacity to accept the responsibility and authority of Co-Investigator status, can be designated as a Co-I in the LOI and later proposal stages. Questions regarding designation of external Co-Is can be directed to research@ohio.edu.

Award types: Awards will be structured to support innovative projects and teams in various stages of development. Projects that meet a high standard for significance and probability of successful execution will have access to major awards that may be $1M or more, to be expended over a period of up to 3 years. Additional funding will be made available to support smaller Planning Grants (up to $20k for 1 year) and Seed Grants (up to $50k for 1 year).
The total projected funding available for this cycle is approximately $4M for large awards and $1M for planning/seed grants. Depending on proposal outcomes, the allocation of funds between the two categories may be subject to revision in this initial cycle. Awards will represent one-time funding (i.e., not continuing base funding). Projects that receive funding in either category must outline plans for sustaining support or durability of impact once OUIS funding ends.

Background: The Ohio University Innovation Strategy was initiated by the university leadership in 2013 to advance the institution’s ability to be forward-looking and responsive to societal challenges. Planning for the Innovation Strategy was undertaken with substantial involvement by the academic deans and supported by the consulting team of Eva Klein Associates.

After lengthy discussion, Innovation was selected as a defining attribute of the university as it positions itself for the future. While the term innovation in higher education settings is often focused on technology commercialization and economic development, Ohio University is adopting a broad definition of innovation that includes the full span of activities at the university. Innovation is thereby understood as the use of new thinking, ideas, methods, tools, and partnerships to advance the university’s outcomes in research, scholarship, creative activity, instruction, and institutional operations.

To foster this concept of innovation and position the university for the future, a framework for targeted investment was proposed. The framework is built around four major portfolios of societal challenges, articulated with thematic subportfolios and niches. Niches were selected as encompassing significant problems, in sectors where the university already has some existing measure of expertise and capacity, and where additional investment can potentially extend the university’s leverage and success in a substantial way.

The Portfolio/Subportfolio/Niche framework was released in September 2014 as part of the Innovation Strategy Interim Report. The framework has undergone some modifications in response to comments from the university community, and the revised framework is presented in Appendix I.

Proposal and Review Process: Proposal submission and review will occur via a multi-stage process.

I. Letter of Intent. The Letter of Intent (LOI) provides initial notice of the formation of a proposing team and the basic elements of their intended proposal. Successful LOIs will be posted in their entirety to an internal Ohio University website and made available for viewing by the university community. This step is intended to provide visibility to the level of competition and the types of anticipated proposals, and to enable teams to potentially attract additional members or merge efforts with other groups when appropriate.

Format. The LOI must be a maximum of one page, single-spaced, 12-pt minimum font, one-inch minimum margins, pdf format.

Contents. The LOI must include the following information (an example is shown in Appendix II):
1) Project title
2) PI name, job title, planning unit, department, email
3) Innovation Strategy niche(s) addressed  
4) Initial estimate of total budget request (detailed justification is not needed)  
5) Narrative statements speaking to the following points:  
   a. Problem to be addressed and its significance  
   b. Proposed activity and purpose of funding  
   c. Existing assets to support the proposed activity  
   d. Expected outcome and its significance  
   e. Durable impact/sustainability after conclusion of the grant

Submission. Letters of Intent must be submitted electronically via the LEO system, which can be accessed at http://leo.research.ohio.edu. The LEO submission template will be available for use by April 15, 2015. The LEO submission entry requires identification of the project PI and Co-Is. Final acceptance of the LOI requires approval by the planning unit head for the PI and each of the Co-Is (excluding external Co-Is). Planning unit heads are contacted automatically for approval by the LEO system after the PI submits the LOI, in a process similar to approval of extramural grant submissions.

Deadline. 4:00 pm EDT Monday May 11, 2015.

If electronic signoff by planning unit heads is incomplete at the deadline, LOIs will still be accepted but will not be approved or posted until all electronic signatures are in place.

Review process. Submitted LOIs will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Council on Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (CRSCA) for compliance with the requirements for Format and Contents stated above. LOI submissions that (a) follow the stated format and include all requested information, and (b) list a team with members from more than one planning unit, and (c) aim to address innovation through an interdisciplinary approach will be deemed eligible to proceed to the next stage.

LOI posting. Successful LOIs will be posted by May 18, 2015 via a link from the Innovation Strategy website at http://www.ohio.edu/research/innovationstrategy.cfm.

II. Pre-Proposal. The pre-proposal provides an opportunity to present a more detailed outline of the proposed activity and its significance.

Eligibility. All teams whose LOI was deemed successful in the review process are eligible to submit a pre-proposal. For the pre-proposal, teams are allowed to change their composition from that listed in the LOI.

Format (amended May 21, 2015). The Pre-Proposal must be a maximum of four pages, single-spaced, 12-pt minimum font, one-inch minimum margins, pdf format. Applicants must use one of the following fonts: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, Georgia, Times New Roman or Computer Modern (for TeX users).

Applications should have the title and PI listed in the header or footer.

Contents. The pre-proposal narrative should speak to the following points.  
   a. Problem to be addressed and its significance including identification of the niche(s)
b. Proposed activity and purpose of funding

c. Brief description of work plan

d. Existing assets to support the proposed activity, including team expertise and project roles

e. Project timeline (maximum 3 years)

f. Expected outcomes and significance: what defines success and how will it be evaluated/demonstrated?

g. Durable impact/sustainability after conclusion of the grant

h. Budget with budget justification (not included within the page limit)

Confidentiality. If the pre-proposal discloses ideas, practices, or processes for which patent protection will be or is being sought, please contact the Research Division (research@ohio.edu) in advance of submission to discuss requirements for handling this information.

Submission. Pre-proposals must be submitted electronically via the LEO system using the Innovation Strategy module at http://leo.research.ohio.edu.

Deadline. 4:00 pm EDT Monday July 13, 2015. Proposals must be uploaded by the deadline. (LEO approvals can be finalized after the deadline)

Review. Pre-proposals will be evaluated by the Review Committee (see below) on the basis of the following criteria:

- Project team is interdisciplinary and drawn from multiple planning units
- Project focus aligns with one or more Innovation Strategy niches
- Project methodology is genuinely interdisciplinary
- Problem to be addressed is clearly defined
- Problem to be addressed is significant
- Project activity is clearly explained
- Project is aligned with existing university assets (e.g., expertise, infrastructure, partnerships) and leverages those effectively
- Project is innovative in bringing new approaches to the problem
- Project scope is realistic
- Project has well defined outcomes/metrics for success
- Anticipated project outcomes will be significant
- Project activity will be sustainable or have durable impact beyond the grant period

Use of Additional Reviews. The academic deans and other planning unit heads will be given the opportunity to review and comment on proposals for which personnel from their respective units are involved as PIs or Co-Ils. Depending on the number of pre-proposals submitted, the review process will also make use of external reviewers (i.e., outside the university) with appropriate expertise to evaluate the degree to which proposed projects are significant and innovative. Dean and external reviews will be used by the Review Committee to inform assessment in relation to the criteria stated above.

Review Committee. The Review Committee will be comprised of faculty and staff who are members of the Council for Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (CRSCA), Associate Deans of the academic colleges, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Executive Dean for Regional Education, Vice President for Student Affairs, Senior Associate Vice President for IT &
Administration, Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovation, and Vice President for Research & Creative Activity.

Announcement of Results. Results of the pre-proposal review will be announced with a target date of August 17, 2015, subject to revision if necessary to successfully execute the review process. A maximum of 12 pre-proposal teams will be invited to submit Full Proposals for major funding. Feedback from the Review Committee will be provided for all Pre-Proposal submissions at the time that results are announced.

III. Unsuccessful Pre-Proposals: Eligibility for Planning Grants.

Teams submitting Pre-Proposals that are not advanced to the Full Proposal stage, but deemed potentially worthy of investment by the Review Committee, will be invited to submit applications for Planning Grants, to support their continued development. Planning Grants are intended to fund activities such as retreats, seminar series, visiting speakers, or other endeavors that will strengthen the team’s ability to propose, plan, and execute a project in their area of interest. The expectation is that Planning Grants will enhance the team’s competitive position for future Innovation Strategy and extramural funding opportunities.

Award size. Funding allocated for a Planning Grant can provide a maximum of $20k per team for a period of one year.

Application process. Applications for Planning Grants will be limited to 2 pages of narrative justification and will have a deadline of no less than four weeks after Pre-Proposal results are announced. Additional details on format and content will be provided at the time that applications are solicited.

Review process. Applications will be evaluated for merit by a committee comprised of CRSCA members, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Executive Dean for Regional Education, Vice President for Student Affairs, Senior Associate Vice President for IT & Administration, Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovation, and Vice President for Research & Creative Activity. The committee will provide recommendations for funding with final decisions made jointly by the Vice President for Research & Creative Activity, Executive Vice President & Provost, and Vice President for Finance & Administration. Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis and is not guaranteed.

IV. Successful Pre-Proposals: Submission of Full Proposals.

Teams that are successful in the review of Pre-Proposals will be invited to submit Full Proposals for major funding. The basic elements of the Full Proposal submission and review process are indicated below, and any amendments will be provided at the time Pre-Proposal results are announced.

Format. Full Proposals must consist of a proposal narrative with a maximum of 10 pages and required appendices. Proposals must be single-spaced, 12-pt minimum font, one-inch minimum margins, pdf format. Applicants must use one of the following fonts: Arial, Helvetica, Palantino Linotype, Georgia, Times New Roman or Computer Modern (for TeX users).
Applications should have the title and PI listed in the header or footer.

Contents. The Full Proposal narrative should speak in more detail to the same points required in the Pre-Proposal:

a. Problem to be addressed and its significance including identification of the niche(s)
b. Proposed activity and purpose of funding
c. Description of work plan, including a project timeline and management plan
d. Existing assets to support the proposed activity, including team expertise and project roles
e. Project timeline (maximum 3 years)
f. Expected outcomes and significance: what defines success and how will it be evaluated/demonstrated?
g. Durable impact/sustainability after conclusion of the grant

Appendices should include

a. 2-page CV for each proposing team member (PI and Co-I/s)
b. Detailed budget and justification
c. Specific metrics for post-award evaluation (max. 2 pages)

Budget items. With appropriate justification, funds can be used for purposes that include supplies, equipment, other infrastructure, salaries, student support, and travel. Questions regarding budget items can be directed to research@ohio.edu.

Confidentiality. If the proposal discloses ideas, practices, or processes for which patent protection will be or is being sought, please contact the Research Division (research@ohio.edu) in advance of submission to discuss requirements for handling this information.

Submission. Full proposals must be submitted electronically via the LEO system using the Innovation Strategy module at http://leo.research.ohio.edu.

Deadline. TBD but at least 5 weeks after announcement of Pre-Proposal results.

Review. Full Proposals will follow the same process as Pre-Proposals in terms of review criteria and procedure. The Review Committee will make recommendations for funding with final decisions made jointly by the Vice President for Research & Creative Activity, Executive Vice President & Provost, and Vice President for Finance & Administration. Target date for announcement of results is 6 weeks after the Full Proposal deadline. Feedback from the Review Committee will be provided for all Full Proposal submissions at the time that results are announced.

V. Unsuccessful Full Proposals: Eligibility for Seed Grants.

Teams submitting Full Proposals that do not receive a major award will be invited to submit applications for Seed Grants, to support their continued development. Seed Grants are intended to enable teams to take initial steps in their intended project that will strengthen the team’s ability to propose, plan, and execute this activity on a larger scale. The expectation is that Seed Grants will enhance the team’s competitive position for future Innovation Strategy and extramural funding opportunities.
Award size. Funding allocated for a Seed Grant will provide an anticipated maximum of $50k per team for a period of one year.

Application process. Applications for Seed Grants will be limited to 3 pages of narrative justification and will have a deadline of no less than four weeks after Full Proposal results are announced. Additional details on format and content will be provided at the time that applications are solicited.

Review process. Applications will be evaluated for merit by a committee comprised of CRSCA members, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Executive Dean for Regional Education, Vice President for Student Affairs, Senior Associate Vice President for IT & Administration, Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovation, and Vice President for Research & Creative Activity. The committee will provide recommendations for funding with final decisions made jointly by the Vice President for Research & Creative Activity, Executive Vice President & Provost, and Vice President for Finance & Administration. Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis and is not guaranteed.

VI. Additional Information and Assistance.

Additional information including FAQs and related materials to support team and proposal development will be made available at the Innovation Strategy website http://www.ohio.edu/research/innovationstrategy.cfm. Information on this site will be updated as needed throughout the process outlined above.

The Research Division is committed to providing assistance to proposing teams to enhance their development and potential for success. The Division will hold workshops, answer questions, and provide individual advising sessions to the extent it can throughout the RFP process.

Questions and requests for assistance should be directed to research@ohio.edu.