



COS Seed Funding Program: 2025-2026

The College of Sciences is sponsoring a Seed Funding Program for COS faculty that will enhance the impact of faculty research and significantly increase the competitiveness of external research funding proposals.

The program includes two grant tracks with different levels of funding and expectations for Seed Grant outcomes.

COS Seed Grant Track 1 (small grants): ~6-8 awards, \$1,000-\$3000 per award

The central requirement of Track 1 grants is that they will provide funding that is critically necessary to enhance the quality of faculty research and increase the likelihood of high-quality publications in highly regarded outlets (*relative to discipline*). Consideration will be given to applications for small grants that also enhance the competitiveness of planned proposals for external funding, but this is not a central requirement (e.g., for areas of study that are not currently supported by federal funding programs).

COS Seed Grant Track 2 (larger grants): ~6-8 awards, ~\$15,000-\$25,000 per award

The primary purpose of Track 2 grants is to provide funding for the development of preliminary findings that will significantly enhance the quality of planned external research funding proposals and increase the likelihood of large external awards (*relative to discipline*) that require preliminary data.

Note: COS seeks to make awards across disciplines in the college. The actual number and dollar amount of awards by discipline will depend on the applications received, but the Seed Grants awarded should collectively strengthen research across natural and social behavioral sciences.

Application Guidelines:

Submission Deadline: Thursday, December 18th 2025, 5:00pm EST

Eligibility Criteria:

- PI T/TE faculty assignment: This program is designed to support faculty with substantial research assignments in the College of Sciences to meet requirements of that assignment. Thus, only tenured/tenure earning faculty with a primary appointment in the COS are eligible to apply as PIs. However, project proposals are welcome that have collaborative teams, including key personnel who are non-T/TE faculty, faculty in other colleges and

institutions, as well as trainees (e.g., postdocs, graduate students).

- **Funding need:** Proposals must address a clear funded need. Thus, PIs who have available funds to support the proposed research (e.g., start up, overhead, active contracts/grants) are not eligible to apply. PIs who received funding from the 2024-2025 OR Seed Funding program are not eligible to apply unless they provide a clear description of how the new application differs from the project that was funded by that program. Additionally, preference will be given to applicants that have not received a COS Seed Funding award in the last 5 years.
- **Matching funds:** Should the proposed project require matching funds from the PI's home unit to meet its objectives, and the applicants' home department will support this need, a letter of support from the PI's department Chair/Director is required that confirms the funding commitment.

Non-Allowable Costs:

- Faculty salary
- Conference travel
- Publication fees

Required Application Process – Each application must contain the following:

1. **Cover Letter:** It should include: a) Project title; b) the name(s) of the proposing PI(s), and the corresponding affiliation(s) at UCF (including contact information of the leading PI); c) Total amount requested and supporting contributions from the PI(s)' units, when applicable. The period of performance must be one year.
2. **Project Description** (3 pages max): It is the PI's job to have a convincing argument that would be sufficiently understandable to experienced researchers, but not necessarily experts in their field. The Project Description may not exceed 3 pages and must contain the following elements:
 - (i) **Background Statement:** Include a brief statement on related prior work in the field (how is it done today), existing challenges or limitations of the current approaches, and how the proposed research will address those challenges.
 - (ii) **Statement of Objectives:** Explain the objective of your proposal (what are you trying to do) without any jargon. Identify a clear relationship with background statement methodology and note significance of anticipated results. Explain what difference it makes if your proposed research is successful.
 - (iii) **Plan of Work:** Provide an appropriate plan for meeting objectives, with a clear explanation of procedures, activities, risks, timeline and milestones; if appropriate, include plan for effective human/animal use and safety. For multi-PI proposals, identify the contribution of each PI and provide a clear plan of collaboration among PIs. The plan of work should take place within 12 months. Project periods longer than 12 months require special justification.
 - (iv) **Description of follow-up activities:**
 - For Track 1 Grants: The follow-up activities section must include plans for

dissemination of the study findings in at least on high impact outlet (e.g., target journal, book, conference proceedings). This section must include evidence for the quality of the dissemination outlet *within the applicant's discipline* (or across disciplines if the target is interdisciplinary) and how the proposed research will fit with that outlet's standards and scope. If applicable, Track 1 Grants may also include plans for external proposals.

- For Track 2 Grants: The follow-up activities section must include plans for externally funded research proposals. For planned proposal submissions include the following: Title of large RFP / funding program, agency, projected deadline date, description of how your research relates to the RFP or program's goals. Include all possible funding sources.
3. References Cited (no page limit): This must include bibliographic citations only and must not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the 3-page Project Description.
 4. Budget with Justification (no page limit): All requested funds (e.g., student support, consumables, participant incentives, travel for collection of critical data) must be integral to the research and not available within the department, college, institute, or center.
 5. Biographical Sketch(es) for PI(s) (limit of 2 pages per PI): A one-page summary of other key personnel may also be included (if applicable), in addition to the PI(s) biosketch(es).
 6. Current and Pending Support (C&P) (no page limit): A record of current and pending support for each investigator is required. FTE information for support is not required. If PIs have available non-grant funds (e.g., overhead), they must show evidence that these funds are not sufficient or cannot be used for research proposed (e.g., required obligations).
 7. Letters of Collaboration (no page limit): Letters of collaboration for non PI/Co-PI key personnel are allowed. No budget information is needed but justify why they are essential to the success to the project. Letters of endorsement/support are not allowed.

Proposal applications should be submitted in a single merged PDF file to COSPreaward@ucf.edu by Thursday, December 18, 2025 at 5:00pm EST with the subject line: COS Seed Grant Application. The applications will be reviewed for adherence to the guidelines before they are advanced to peer review by the COS Research Committee.

For questions and clarifications, please contact COS Interim Associate Dean for Research, Nichole Lighthall and nichole.lighthall@ucf.edu.

Review process, criteria, and announcement of awards

Review Criteria: Applications will be evaluated and scored in each of the following criteria:

(i) Potential impact of the proposed research on the field as well as on the faculty member's research program
(ii) Intellectual merit (novelty) of the proposed research including the feasibility and quality of the plan of work (what will be learned / achieved if the proposed program is successful)
(iii) Broader Impact to society (what difference it will make if the proposed research is successful)
(iv) Likelihood of seed grant project to yield findings for one or more high-impact publications appropriate to discipline (required for Track 1 Grants; optional for Track 2 Grants)
(v) Likelihood of seed grant project to substantially increase competitiveness for external research funding appropriate to discipline (required for Track 2 Grants; optional for Track 1 Grants)

Review Process: The COS Research Committee, which includes elected faculty members from each unit, will review the proposals and will jointly discuss proposal in order to produce panel-level recommendations for funding of the most competitive applications. The COS Interim Associate Dean of Research and Dean will make the final funding decisions.

Announcement of Awards: Proposals will be reviewed in January 2026 and awards announcements are expected in February 2026, exact date to be announced.

Deliverables:

- Recipients of funding for this program must submit a final report to the COS Interim Associate Dean of Research within 30 days of the end of the award period. This report should include an abstract of the completed work.
- A follow-up report will be required 6 months after the award to update on the status of Follow-up Activities (publications for Track 1 Grants; proposals for Track 2 Grants). Progress and/or success on these deliverables will impact the PI(s) opportunity for future COS Seed Grant programs.