

Startup Guidelines from the Office of the Vice President for Research

The Office of Research (OoR), at the University of Cincinnati (UC), provides support to the college/school deans to assist in attracting new and outstanding faculty who will be engaged in research and scholarly activity as a major component of their appointment. The intention of these funds is to provide the resources needed to establish a scholarly research program that will lead to the generation of external research funding.

This document sets forth guidelines for requesting startup assistance from the OoR, contributions expected to start-up funds from academic units within the college, and expectations for expenditure of start-up funds by the faculty member.

Eligibility

Only tenured/tenure track positions are eligible for OoR start-up funds. Exceptions for non-tenured/non-tenure-track appointments involving research may be approved on a compelling case basis where a long-term appointment is being made and where the individual would be engaged in research, scholarship, or creative work.

Support Available

Start-up funds are allocated based on expressed needs for support that are reasonable for enabling the “start-up” of a new faculty member’s research program. These funds are intended to support the initial launch of the faculty member’s research, with the understanding that ongoing support should come from external sources.

- Start-up funds provided by the OoR may be used for research equipment, research supplies, computing/IT supplies, post-doc/technical staff, and travel and professional development funds related to research.
- The OoR will support no more than 25% of the total cost of any high-performance computing systems unless the startup package addresses the use of complementary resources available institutionally and through the Ohio Supercomputing Center.
- The OoR will not provide funds for undergraduate or graduate students, scholarships (non-GIA/GAS funding), conference travel, summer salary for nine-month contracts, professional fees, subscriptions or memberships, relocation, office furniture and desktop computers. These items may be included in the support from the college or unit.

If faculty start-up funds are used to finance a research/technical position, the prospective employee must be informed, in writing, that funding is temporary and that there is no commitment of employment after the funding is exhausted. Funds must be adequate to cover salary and associated fringe benefit costs as determined through the fringe benefit rate established by the University. Works of art, rare books, general office supplies and any cost unrelated to faculty research or scholarly activity are not allowable start-up expenditures.

The OoR will provide up to 50% of the requested start-up funding, subject to the category limitations noted above. Startup requests from STEMM units must exceed \$100,000 (total startup package) to be eligible for OoR support. Startup requests from non-STEMM units must provide compelling evidence that the hire will be expected to secure external research/scholarship funding and supporting documentation that similar faculty have secured external research funding.

Joint Hires

Requests for start-up funds for joint appointment positions should be made by the “lead” unit, the academic department where tenure would be applied. It is anticipated that the unit and college portion of start-up support will be split consistent with the effort of the recruit in each area.

Period of Support/Extensions/Early Termination

Unless otherwise stated in the faculty offer letter, all OoR start-up funds should be expended within three years of the initial hiring date. Exceptions must be submitted to the Vice President for Research for approval via the Faculty Startup Extension Request form. The form requires the faculty to state why the funds weren’t expended within the allocated period and the dean of the college to provide a documented plan to help the faculty member succeed. Submit the extension request at the end of the startup period, together with the annual progress and expense reports and dean’s approval, to yprstartup@uc.edu. The standard due dates for annual reports are noted in the faculty startup award letter. The dean of the college is required to review and approve the annual reports, as well as the extension request, prior to submittal to the OoR. Submittal on behalf of the college dean is allowable as long as the submittal contains the dean’s written approval.

If a faculty member terminates his/her appointment prior to expending all faculty start-up funds, any remaining balance will be swept back to OoR start-up fund pool for future distribution. Any start-up expense after the employment end date will be the responsibility of the college. Any faculty who leave the university and wish to take resources obtained from OoR start-up must receive written approval from the dean and Vice President for Research.

Re-Budgeting Guidelines

Minor adjustments in the approved start-up budget may be made at the faculty member’s discretion. However, any budget modification amounting to 20% or more of the total allocation must be approved by the OoR. Total allocation is referring to the entire startup package regardless of the source of support. If the faculty want to re-budget among categories within 20% of the total, they may do so without Vice President for Research approval. Keep in mind, OoR only supports certain budget categories. Re-budget must be within those approved categories: research equipment & supplies, computing/IT supplies, post-doc/technical staff, and travel & professional development funds related to research.

Office of Research Expectations

OoR funds support of startup packages should not be assumed or committed without express approval of the Vice President for Research. The total level of startup support annually for each college/school will depend upon a number of factors, including but not limited to: university general funds budget, college/unit research productivity, the college/unit research culture, and specific university initiatives and priorities.

Process

The Vice President for Research will work with college/school deans, on a yearly basis, to determine the allocation of start-up funds for each college/school. Any department needing start-up funds for new faculty should work directly through the college deans. Academic unit heads in conjunction with the dean of the college are responsible for securing start-up needs from the faculty candidate before submitting a start-up funding request.

The start-up offer/appointment letter, CV and budget (using the OoR Start-up Budget Template) must be submitted to the Vice President for Research prior to seeking candidate acceptance for position.

The college business office will notify the OoR business office once an offer has been accepted or declined and forward a copy of the signed offer letter.

Prior to the start date of the faculty member, the OoR will send a funding letter to the college business officer and copy the department business manager. The funding letter defines the award amount and period of commitment. The funding letter also includes the reporting requirements, as well as account information for disbursement of funds and to process expenditures (example attached).

The college business office signs the funding letter and returns to the OoR. A fully executed letter will be returned to the college.

The new faculty member will submit an annual progress report for each year of funding. This brief report will explain how these start-up funds have advanced the faculty member's research career. The summary should include activities undertaken to obtain external funding and any publications/presentations during the preceding year.

Business managers must submit an expense report for each new faculty start-up package on an annual basis. The dean of the college is required to review and approve both the progress and expense reports prior to submittal to vprstartup@uc.edu. Submittal on behalf of the dean of the college is allowable as long as the submittal contains the dean's approval. Release of subsequent years of support will be made after the Vice President for Research has reviewed and approved these reports.

It is the responsibility of the faculty member, dean of the college, and the college's research officer to ensure that funds are expended appropriately.

The timeframe for spending college/unit funds is at the individual college's discretion. Any funding provided at the conclusion of the 3rd year will be solely the college/unit responsibility.

University financial policies and related budget and financial practices in effect at the time of developing a start-up package apply.

Startup Documents, Annual Reports and Extension Request Templates are available on the Research How 2 site:

<http://researchhow2.uc.edu/>

Click on Search Resources at top right

Enter **startup** in the "Enter Keywords" field

Financial Policies

<http://www.uc.edu/af/policies.html>

Asset Management Policies & Procedures Manual

https://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/af/controller/AssetManagement/Docs/asset_manual.pdf

Additional Information

Answers to the following questions will assist in a smooth transition for your new faculty member.

YES / N/A Have all facility associated accommodations required for the installation and functioning of any instruments either included in the start-up or to be moved to UC from the candidate's prior institution been considered (funding and timeframe for renovation; consultation with Environmental Health and Safety) within this process prior to submission to the OoR?

YES / NO Will this research involve specialized research needs such as the use of human subjects, vertebrate animals, hazardous or radioactive materials, recombinant DNA, or pathogenic organisms, that require review by a University research committee?

YES / NO Does this prospective faculty member have any involvement in a startup company or are there other disclosures the candidate will be required to make on a financial basis?

YES / NO Does this prospective faculty member have research equipment to transfer to UC?