

RESEARCH & CREATIVE ACTIVITIES PROGRAM (RCAP)

2025 Guidelines & Application



Important Notes:

- Applicants are limited to one application submission as Principal Investigator, but may serve as Co-Investigator on multiple projects.
- Principal Investigators who received funding in the previous application cycle (FY24) are not eligible to apply as Principal Investigator during this cycle.
- Project period dates: May 15, 2024 – August 15, 2025. Final reports due February 15, 2026.
- Project spending prior to the start date will not be reimbursed.
- Application forms must be edited using Adobe Acrobat Pro or Reader. Other PDF software (i.e. Preview) may not be compatible.

I. Program Description

RCAP funding is provided by the Office of Research and Creative Activity (ORCA) to encourage faculty to develop individual or collaborative projects leading to the pursuit of external funding sources and the promotion of research, scholarly, and creative scholarship. RCAP targets all disciplines and academic pursuits, including international activities, entrepreneurial efforts, and innovative scientific or artistic endeavors. All projects should aim to incorporate undergraduate and/or graduate students, whether monetarily supported by RCAP or not.

Category Type

Applications must be submitted for one of two categories of funding:

- **Category I** funds are considered "seed" monies and will be awarded to Principal Investigators (PIs) to enhance the competitiveness of a subsequent submission of a new or renewal proposal for external funding.
 - Awards up to **\$16,000**
 - Funds target ALL disciplines
 - Awardees are required to submit a proposal for extramural funding as a result of RCAP support no later than the next sponsor deadline
- **Category II** funds support the general development, expansion, or enhancement of faculty research and scholarly activity, and/or the creative and performing arts. Category II funds may also support projects leading to external funding.
 - Awards up to **\$8,000**
 - Funds target ALL disciplines

RCAP awardees in both categories are encouraged to work with the Office of Sponsored Programs and their Assistant/Associate Dean (or college-level equivalent) to identify outside funding sources in support of their RCAP-funded project. Additionally, these offices may help identify a WKU grants mentor to assist the PI during the external grant proposal process.

II. Project Period

The project period for awards is **May 15, 2024 – August 15, 2025**. Project spending prior to the start date will not be reimbursed. RCAP funds must be expended by the project end date. A final outcomes report will be due by February 15, 2026.

III. Eligibility

Principal Investigator: All full-time faculty (including research-track faculty) and instructors at all campuses who have independent programs of research or creative scholarship are invited to apply.

Applications may include multiple investigators, but one investigator must be designated as the Principal Investigator (PI); other investigators are to be listed as Co-Investigators. In each funding cycle, a faculty member may serve as Principal Investigator on only one RCAP application and as Co-Investigator on multiple RCAP projects. Principal Investigators who received RCAP funding in the previous application cycle (FY24) are **not** eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator during the current RCAP application cycle (FY25).

Note: Others not included in the above definition may be authorized to apply for RCAP funding on a case-by-case basis. Email a detailed request to internal.grants@wku.edu for consideration by ORCA and the PI's college.

Pivot Profile: Pivot is a comprehensive resource for identifying external project funding and potential collaborators. All individuals designated as the Principal Investigator are required to both create a Pivot account and claim their profile prior to submitting an application. Applicants should indicate their status on the application Cover Sheet. Detailed instructions on creating and claiming your Pivot Profile can be found on [YouTube](#) or by contacting internal.grants@wku.edu.

IV. Compliance

If the project involves human subjects, animal subjects, export control issues, rDNA/RGZ microbe, or bio-hazards, appropriate institutional approval(s) must be obtained before the project begins and funds are spent. Contact the Office of Research Integrity (ori@wku.edu) for further information or visit <http://www.wku.edu/compliance/>.

V. Budget Information

Budgets must be presented within the RCAP Budget Form in general categories with detailed explanation. Although ORCA intends to fund projects in full, it reserves the right to alter budgets.

Allowable Costs

- Part-time personnel salary and fringe benefits (all personnel costs must be detailed and justified):
 - Graduate assistant(s) or graduate student(s)
 - Undergraduate student(s)
 - Technician(s)
- Project supplies and materials
- Computers (must demonstrate how it is essential to the project, not otherwise available, and retained at WKU)
- Equipment (single items which cost more than \$2,000 – all equipment must be permanently housed at WKU)
- Travel essential to conduct the project or accomplish proposed objectives
- Participant Support costs and/or Human Subjects payments
- Other project costs, including but not limited to:
 - Animal care and maintenance
 - Performance/Production costs (Creative and Performing Arts only)
 - Payment for services conducted by a non-WKU employee (i.e. consultant, evaluator, or contractor)

Unallowable Costs

- Any spending that occurs outside of the project period
- Faculty/staff/investigator/post-doc salary and fringe benefits
- Memberships/Dues
- Costs in connection with faculty degree requirements
- Travel to professional meetings or conferences (including associated presenting costs)
- Tuition costs for students
- Publication costs, including indexing and editing services (exception: performing arts production costs)
- Presentation costs, including poster printing
- Meals (exceptions: allowable travel per diem, participant support stipends)

VI. Application Instructions

To submit an application for RCAP funding, complete the **2025 RCAP Application below** using *Adobe Acrobat Pro* or *Adobe Acrobat Reader*. Failure to use the current application form with *RCAP FY25* watermark will result in the application being returned without review. Complete the cover sheet, budget form, and budget narrative. Attach a three-page proposal narrative and the required supporting documents as described below. Incomplete applications may be returned. If any page limits are exceeded or if extraneous materials are submitted, these will not be forwarded for review. *Applications should be easily understood by faculty peers across disciplines.*

Complete applications include the following elements:

1. **RCAP Application Forms:** Cover Sheet, Budget Form, and Budget Narrative
2. **Proposal Narrative** (limited to 3 pages, Arial 11-point font, half-inch margins) including the following sections:
 - a. Background and significance of the project, including its relation to the present state of knowledge in the field
 - b. Project description, methodology/strategy, goals and objectives
 - c. Expected accomplishments and specific outcome(s) of the project (book, journal article, presentation, grant proposal, etc.) and a brief statement addressing how the project outcome(s) will impact the investigator's career, scholarly reach, and enhance(s) the reputation of WKU
 - d. Description of necessary resources (i.e. existing facilities, equipment, etc. that will be available to the project)
 - e. Detailed timeline of project tasks
 - f. An outline of each investigator's role, and if applicable, how the inter-collegiate or inter-institutional collaboration adds to the project
 - g. A discussion of potential external funding sources and how RCAP funding will improve chances of obtaining external funding (required for Category I proposals and optional for Category II proposals)
3. **Supporting Documentation** attached at the end of the proposal narrative (*not* counted toward the proposal narrative page limit, Arial 11-point font, half-inch margins):
 - a. References or Works Cited (include as appropriate).
 - b. Biographical sketch/curriculum vitae for **each** investigator (limited to 3 pages each) including education, experience, relevant publications, and current and pending research/project support from both external and internal funding sources. Include links to any professional/scholarly electronic profiles (ex. a professional website, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, MyNCBI, etc.). The biographical sketch may follow NIH, NSF, or other standard agency formats, but must adhere to the three-page limit.

VII. Submission Instructions & Deadlines

February 5, 2024 – Email the completed application to your Department Chair/Director for review and approval.

February 12, 2024 – Department Chair emails the application to the Dean (or designee) for review and approval.

February 26, 2024, 11:59 p.m. – Applicant is responsible for ensuring the completed application (with approvals) is submitted as a single PDF file attachment to internal.grants@wku.edu prior to the deadline.

For assistance with combining documents into a single PDF, please contact internal.grants@wku.edu at least 24 hours before the submission deadline. Final applications with Department Chair and Dean (or designee) approvals may be submitted by the PI or the Dean's office; however, *it is ultimately the applicant's responsibility to ensure all approvals are obtained and the final application is emailed as a single PDF file attachment to internal.grants@wku.edu by **11:59 p.m. on February 26, 2024.***

VIII. Notifications

It is anticipated that applicants will be notified of funding decisions by May 6, 2024. Please do not contact the Office of Research & Creative Activity prior to this date to inquire about the status of your proposal. Project spending prior to the start date will not be reimbursed.

IX. Other Resources

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) * [Assistance with Pivot Profile](#) * [Award Requirements](#)

Questions? Email internal.grants@wku.edu

X. Review Process

Applications that are complete and responsive to this announcement will be evaluated for merit by the RCAP Review Committee comprised of faculty representatives. The Committee will then provide a prioritized list of funding recommendations to the Office of Research and Creative Activity based on the quality of the proposals per the review criteria below. Not all criteria may apply to all proposals.

Note: If applicable, an applicant's award history, project outcomes, and award management will be considered. All RCAP awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Review Criteria

I. Proposal Narrative

- *Background / Significance*
 - Is the significance of the project established?
 - Does the project address an important problem, need, or barrier?
 - Does the proposal provide a compelling argument for the research or creative activity?
 - Does the proposed project represent a significant contribution to the investigator's field of study?
- *Strategy / Methodology / Goals & Objectives*
 - Does the proposal provide a clear statement of overall project objectives?
 - Is the plan for carrying out the proposed activities well-reasoned, well-organized, and based on a sound rationale?
 - Are the overall strategies and methodologies appropriate to accomplish the project objectives?
- *Impact / Outcomes*
 - Will the project lead to further scholarly activity?
 - Will there be publication(s), public dissemination, or public performance(s)?
- *Project Timeline / Feasibility of Work Plan*
 - Is a detailed and feasible project timeline included?
 - Does the applicant convey that the proposed activities will be completed within the project period?
 - Are there adequate resources available to support proposed activities?
- *Project Team / Qualifications*
 - Does the applicant have the appropriate qualifications and experience needed to execute the project?
 - If the project is interdisciplinary or collaborative, is the collaborative nature/benefit and the role of collaborators clearly explained?
- *Follow-on Proposal (Category I only)*
 - Does the applicant include a plan to submit a subsequent proposal(s) for extramural funding?
 - Does the proposed project improve chances for funding from external sources?

II. Budget & Justification

- Is the budget a considered and economical use of resources rather than a claim for maximum possible funding?
- Is the budget appropriate for the proposed activities and does it follow RCAP budget guidelines?
- Does the budget narrative provide a sound justification with clear and specific budget information?

III. Supplementary Documents

- Were biographical sketches, or CVs, with the requested details, included for each member of the project team?
- Do the biographical sketches, or CVs, convey that the project personnel have the expertise necessary to successfully complete the project?
- Were only allowable supplementary documents included: Biographical Sketches & References (if applicable)?

IV. Overall Assessment

- Did the applicant follow the application instructions?
- Is the text of the proposal well-written and understandable by faculty from different disciplines?
- Does the project enhance the scholarly impact and overall reputation of WKU?

2025 Research & Creative Activities Program (RCAP) Cover Sheet	RCAP# (internal use only)
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Proposal Title:			
Project Keywords:			
Principal Investigator:			
WKU ID:		Department Chair:	
Email Address:		Dean:	
Department:		Office Associate/Coordinator:	

Co-Investigators: List the project's additional investigators, if applicable (please do not list students)

Name:	Department/College or Organization:	Email Address:

Funding Level: Select one Category Type AND one Project Type (Click [HERE](#) for Project Type definitions)

Category Type:	Project Type:

Project Involves: Approval must be obtained before project begins/funds are expended

Export Controls
Human Subjects
Animal Subjects
rDNA/RGZ Microbe
Bio-hazards
Intellectual Property

Research/Scholarly Profile: All applicants (PIs only) must claim their Pivot profile

Pivot Profile(s) Claimed?	Yes	No	
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Does this project involve an international component? <small>*If international travel is involved, complete the fields below.</small>	Yes*	No
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Country of Travel:	Tentative Travel Dates:

Have you and/or Co-Is received an RCAP grant before? <small>*If yes, what extramural funding have you/Co-Is applied for and/or received as a result?</small>	Yes*	No
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External Proposals: List possible funding opportunities you might submit to as an outcome of this project

Agency/Sponsor:	Program(s) to Which You May Apply:	Upcoming Deadline(s):

**** Department Head and Dean (or designee) Electronic Signature Approval ****

Indicate if you approve the content and submission of this RCAP application. By marking the approval box and typing your name and date below, you are signing with the same authority as a handwritten signature.

		Name	Date
PI's Department Chair	I Approve		
PI's Dean (or designee)	I Approve		

2025 RCAP Budget Form

Funding Amount Limits:

Category I Projects - may not exceed \$16,000
 Category II Projects - may not exceed \$8,000

ITEM	AMOUNT REQUESTED
Personnel (specify type – undergraduate, graduate student or assistant, or part-time technician)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
Fringe Benefits - Click HERE for current fringe benefit rates	
	\$
	\$
	\$
Materials & Supplies (ex. single items which cost less than \$2,000)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Equipment (e.g. single items which cost \$2,000 or greater)	
	\$
	\$
Travel (only travel vital to conduct the project; conference travel for professional development/presentation is not supported)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Participant Support and/or Human Subjects	
	\$
	\$
Other	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED:	\$

Budget Narrative: Provide a detailed explanation and justification for all project costs in the space below.

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Attach PDF of Proposal Narrative & Supporting Documentation below as outlined in the application guidelines.