



Research & Creative Activities Program

Frequently Asked Questions

I. General

May I submit more than one proposal?

- Applicants are limited to one RCAP application submission as Principal Investigator per funding cycle, but individuals may serve as a Co-Investigator on multiple projects.

Can I serve as a Principal Investigator (PI) and as Co-Investigator on several different projects?

- Yes. However, applicants are limited to one RCAP application submission as Principal Investigator per funding cycle but may serve as a Co-Investigator on multiple projects.

Are there any restrictions for applying for an RCAP grant in sequential years?

- Yes. Principal Investigators that received funding in the previous application cycle are not eligible to apply during this cycle but may apply again in the next funding cycle. PIs that received funding in the previous application cycle are eligible to serve as a Co-Investigator during this cycle.
- PI's who have received a RCAP Category I grant and have not completed the deliverables are not eligible to apply as a PI for the new cycle.

Will there be more than one submission deadline throughout the academic year?

- Proposals will be accepted annually during the spring semester. An announcement will be made via email and on the Office of Sponsored Programs website regarding the submission deadline.

Can I view a copy of a funded RCAP proposal to serve as an example for my own proposal?

- Lists of RCAP recipients from prior competitions can be found at: https://www.wku.edu/sponsoredprograms/rcap_past-awardees.php
It is recommended that you contact one or more of these recipients to ask if they would share their proposals.

When will I be notified of my funding status?

- Applicants will be notified of funding decisions May 1. 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.**

II. Application

How do I apply?

- Beginning November 2024, applications for the FY26 RCAP Funding Cycle will be submitted through the SPIRIT website portal. SPIRIT can be accessed from the [RCAP website](#).

Where can I review the application guidelines?

- The current funding cycle guidelines can be viewed from the [RCAP website](#) and within the SPIRIT

application portal. The application portal will require applicants to review the guidelines before creating an application.

What are some helpful tips for navigating the application in SPIRIT?

- Many buttons in the application feature “tool tips” that provide helpful information in a pop-up module when a mouse hovers over them. The “Send for Approval” button will be inactive until all required elements of the application are complete. As a tip, hover your mouse over the inactive “Send for Approval” button to view a dynamic list of incomplete items for the application.

How do I provide the project narrative and other required documentation?

- The new application portal through SPIRIT requires the applicant to upload the following documents as separate, pdf documents: Narrative, Budget Justification, Curriculum Vita (for the PI and any associated Co-PIs listed), and References/Works Cited (if applicable). The application provides upload links for each respective document within the application portal. **Refer to the Guidelines for page and font requirements.**

Can you clarify what “References or Works Cited” refers to?

- “References” refers to a biography or list of ‘works cited’ in the narrative portion of the proposal. This does not refer to letters of reference or letters of support. Not all applications will require references or works cited.

What is current & pending support?

- All ongoing or proposed projects and activities supported by an outside entity or by internal grant funds should be identified in your biosketch. Any proposed projects and all other activities requiring a portion of time should be included.

Are there any summer salary/stipends available under the RCAP program, or can the funds be used to support a course buy-out?

- No, faculty/staff/investigator salary and fringe benefits are unallowable costs.

On the application form, what is the Project Type used for?

- After reviewing the definitions for each project type, select the one that most closely describes the proposed project. Project type data is used to report on institutional support for research and is not used to score applications.

Can you describe each Project Type?

- **Research**
Research includes those activities intended to produce one or more research outcomes, including the creation of knowledge, the organization of knowledge, and the application of knowledge.
Basic Research - Research undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge without any application or use in mind.
Applied Research - Research conducted to gain the knowledge or understanding to meet a specific, recognized need.
Developmental Research - The systematic use of the knowledge or understanding gained from research directed toward the production of useful materials, devices, systems, or methods, including the design and development of prototypes and processes.
- **Public Service** - Public Service includes those program elements established to make available to the public the various unique resources and capabilities of the institution for the specific purpose of responding to a community need or solving a community problem.
- **Student Services** - Student Service includes those activities carried out with the objective of contributing to the emotional and physical well-being of the students, as well as to their intellectual, cultural, and social development outside the context of the institution's formal Instruction program.

- **Instruction** - Instruction includes those activities carried out for the expressed purpose of eliciting some measure of educational change in a learner or group of learners.

Are other endorsements or letters allowed?

- No. Documents not specifically requested in the application guidelines will not be considered in review.

Is a Co-PI required?

- A Co-PI is not required.

Will my Co-PI(s) be able to review the application in SPIRIT?

- WKU-Affiliated Co-PI's will receive an automatically generated email from SPIRIT when they are added to the proposal. The email will include a link to the application.
- Non-WKU Affiliated Co-PI's will not receive communication from SPIRIT and cannot view the application in SPIRIT.

Is the Co-PI required to upload a CV or biosketch?

- Yes, a CV or biosketch is required for each Co-PI. The PI or the WKU-Affiliated Co-PI can upload the CV/biosketch in the SPIRIT application. The PI must upload the CV/biosketch for Non-WKU Affiliated Co-PI's.

What do the different statuses of my application mean in SPIRIT?

Not Submitted	When an application is created but has not yet been submitted for approvals.
Pending Approval	When the applicant selects 'Send for Approvals'
Pending Revision	When the Department Chair or College Approver selects 'Return for Revisions' on the application (<i>if needed</i>)
Approvals Received (Not Submitted)	When approvals have been received from Department Chair & College Approver. (<i>PI has not yet selected the 'Submit to ORCA' button</i>)
Pending	When the applicant selects "Submit to ORCA"
Pending Revision (ORCA)	When ORCA staff return the application for updates/revisions (<i>if needed</i>)
Submission Received	When the application has been reviewed by the ORCA staff and accepted (<i>does not require further revisions</i>)
Awarded Pending Compliance	Final decisions - Awarded. Email sent: Application contains a compliance need. Documentation required before the award is active.
Awarded	Final decision. Awarded. Email sent to applicant with further information.
Not Funded	Final decision. Email sent to applicant with further information.
Withdrawn	When the applicant does not complete an application. (<i>ORCA Staff select this option when appropriate</i>)
Closed	Selected by ORCA staff when the final report is complete.

III. Approval Process and Submission to ORCA

How do department and college-level approvals work in SPIRIT?

- The PI will be prompted to enter their college-level approver (typically the associate dean or faculty fellow for research in their college), their department chair (or unit director), and the office associate/coordinator for their department/unit.
- When the PI is ready to submit the application for approvals, the PI selects the button to 'submit for approvals.' SPIRIT will automatically email the individual listed as the Department Chair as the

first approver. When this approval is obtained, SPIRIT will automatically email the college approver. The PI is copied on these communications.

- See [the approval flow document linked here](#) for details.
- Office Associate/Coordinators are not approvers, but they will receive an email to notify them of the submitted application. They are also notified of awarded and not-funded notifications.

*The following list was provided by the Research and Creative Activities Council to convey the approver for each college. This list is provided as a courtesy; it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all approvals are obtained, and the application is submitted before the deadline.

CEBS	
CHHS	Ritchie Taylor
GFCB	Alex Lebedinsky
OCSE	Cathleen Webb
PCAL	Jeffrey Budziak

For non-academic units, please use your first line supervisor and second line supervisor for approvals.

Who is responsible for submitting the application to ORCA in SPIRIT?

- The PI is responsible for selecting the "Submit to ORCA" button before the application deadline.

Does the Co-PI's Department Chair and College Dean need to review and approve the application?

- Only the primary PI will be asked to enter their Department Chair's name and their College-Level Approver's name for approval purposes. Co-PI's are informed via email when they are added to a proposal in the SPIRIT platform.
- It is the responsibility of the PI and/or Co-PI to inform the Co-PI's Department Chair and Dean of their involvement on the project.

If a RCAP proposal impacts or involves a WKU-affiliated institute/center outside of the PI's home department should the institute/center electronically sign the proposal?

- The PI is responsible for ensuring that all institutes/centers involved in the project are aware and agree to participate as described in the proposal.

IV. Review Process

Who serves on the RCAP Review Committee?

- The committee is comprised of faculty representatives from across campus. An initial reviewer pool includes faculty interested in serving on the RCAP Review Committee. Following the application deadline, RCAP Review Committee members will be selected from the reviewer pool based upon the number and types of proposals received. Additionally, administrative ex-officio representatives from the Office of Sponsored Programs serve on the committee.

Can you explain the review process and how funding decisions are made?

- Applications complete and responsive to this announcement will be evaluated for merit by the RCAP Review Committee comprising 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: The applicant's prior award history, including project outcomes and award management, will be considered. Special consideration will be given to potential first-time awardees. All RCAP awards are subject to the availability of funds.
- The PI, Department Chair, College Approver, Office Associate, and Co-PI (if applicable) are notified

of award decisions via email via SPIRIT.

Do I need to attend the RCAP Review Committee meeting or make a brief presentation about my proposal?

- No, applicants do not present information about their proposals to the review committee.

How can I become a RCAP Review Committee member?

- Email internal.grants@wku.edu with your interest in being added to the reviewer pool. Following the application deadline, RCAP Review Committee members will be selected from the reviewer pool based upon the number and types of proposals received.

V. Tips for Preparing an Application

- Review the Application Instructions and Review Criteria carefully as you draft your narrative to ensure that your application is responsive to the guidelines.
- We recommend that someone outside your field review your narrative before submission, as reviewers may not be familiar with your field/topic. Your narrative should be easily understood by faculty peers across disciplines, and technical jargon should be limited.
- Be descriptive in your budget and make sure that all costs are allowable.