

Title: Standard Operations Procedures for Organized Research and Creative Activity (ORCA) Program

Version: 1

Effective Date: September 1, 2026

Responsible Party: Research and Innovation Council (RIC)

Review Cycle: Annual

1. Purpose

To ensure a fair, transparent, and consistent process for evaluating and awarding ORCA grants while strengthening applicant support and improving evaluation quality across all levels of review.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all faculty applicants, departmental committees, department chairs, college deans, the university-level ORCA Review Committee (ORC), the Research and Innovation Council (RIC), and the Office of the Provost.

3. Guiding Principles

- Maintain funding decisions at the university level via an independent ORCA Committee.
- Improve fairness, transparency, and consistency in evaluation.
- Reduce disciplinary bias and variability in review quality.
- Strengthen evaluation and scoring practices aligned with the ORCA Evaluation Rubric.
- Clarify roles across all review levels. Provide actionable feedback to applicants. Ensure appropriate access to materials for all stakeholders.

4. Governance Structure

- The ORCA Review Committee (ORC) is comprised of a faculty member from each department appointed by the department chair.
 - Preference should be given to those faculty members who have received ORCA grants in the past.
 - No faculty member serving on the ORC may submit an ORCA proposal in the same year that they are serving on the ORC.
 - Members will be appointed for a one-year term.
- ORC conducts independent evaluations and makes funding recommendations to the Research and Innovation Council (RIC).

- RIC reviews and confirms recommendations or confers with the committee where they do not agree with the recommendations.
- RIC provides the Provost with recommendations for funded awards for the cycle.
- The Provost makes final award determinations and announcements.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- Departmental Committee: Provide supporting feedback to provide applicant with best proposal for reading by a broad range of ORC members with a focus on items in ORCA Evaluation Rubric
- Department Chair:
 - Evaluates feasibility and applicant readiness.
 - Address items for evaluation in the ORCA Evaluation Rubric.
 - Provide assessment of the ability of applicant to carry out proposed activity based on available time to the applicant, needed departmental and university resources.
 - Provide information on value to the applicant's professional development.
 - Provide relevant information on the candidate's productivity in scholarship and creative activities.
- College Dean: Provides additional commentary.
- ORCA Review Committee:
 - Conducts final review and recommends funding.
 - All members of the ORC must review each application.

6. Applicant Requirements

Completed ORCA Proposal, prior ORCA materials within three years if applicable, and summary of prior results.

7. Communication and Feedback

Applicants receive feedback from Departmental Committee, Chair, Dean, and ORC.

8. Timeline & Workflow

Spring Semester: ORC members are appointed.

May 15: Call for Proposals, criteria, and evaluation rubric sent out by RIC.

August 31: Department Committees assigned and chair elected.

Sept 1: Draft submission to Department Committee.

Oct 1: Department Committee provides feedback.

Oct 15: Final submission to the Department Chair.

Nov 1: Department Chair review.

Nov 15: Dean review.

Dec 15: ORC review and submission to RIC.

Jan 16: RIC submits recommendations to Provost

Jan 31: Provost announces winners.

Spring Semester: RIC reviews process and makes update to proposal form, criteria, and evaluation rubric.

10. Continuous Improvement

Ongoing refinement of evaluation practices, bias reduction, and applicant support.

Application Template

A. Title of Proposal:

B. Name of Applicant:

Department:

Rank:

Email Address:

C. Brief Description of Proposal: Provide a brief description of the proposed work and explain how the proposed work will support the goals and/or objectives of the university, college, and/or department, and do at least one of the following: (a) contribute to knowledge in the discipline; (b) have the potential to result in patents or licenses for commercial products; (c) have the potential to generate peer-reviewed publications and/or other deliverables commonly accepted for research and scholarship or creative activities in the Faculty Annual Merit process and the Rank and Tenure process, (d) have the potential to attract additional funding from external funding sources. (Less than 300 words)

D. Agreement to present resulting work at ORCA Symposium.

E. Total of ORCA funding requested.

F. Additional Funding Requests:

Provide a brief statement concerning efforts to obtain additional funding from other sources to help fund the proposed project.

Provide a list (including sources and amounts) of all funding the proposer has received for **this** project in the past

G. ORCA Program Compliance:

Indicate if your study will include any of the following components. This information is used by the ORSP to track compliance for institutional reporting, but is not used in determining FFL recipients.

Please note that if your research involves any of the following components, your work may be bound by other institutional or external compliance requirements which must be met before university funds can be distributed.

1. Does your project contain human subjects? (If yes, attach a copy of IRB application if available. If approval is pending, you can attach the draft of the application)
2. Does your project require animal welfare approval? (If yes, attach a copy of your IACUC review form. If approval is pending, you can attach the draft of the application).
3. Will your project require renovation or construction costs? (If yes, attach the cost of estimates from Facilities Management).
4. Does your project involve hazardous waste? (If yes, attach the project hazard assessment form).
5. Does your project include collaborators, partners, or sub-recipients outside of UHD? (If yes, please upload written authorizations by a signatory authority from outside institutions.)
6. Does your project require Bio-Safety Committee approval? (If so, attach the approval form).

G. Project Description: Please include the following (Limit 3 pages excluding references):

- *Description of Project:* As applicable, describe the relationship of the proposed project to the current state of knowledge or previous work done in the field.
- *Methodology:* Describe the methodology that will be used for the project and, as applicable, the sample sizes to be tested, the statistical methods for analysis, and/or the processes by which the exhibit or performance will be prepared.

Include brief descriptions of equipment and materials needed to support the project.

- *Citations or Bibliography:* On a separate page, provide a list of the references that were cited in the "Description of Project" and/or "Methodology" sections above
- *Plan of Work:* Provide a timetable for the completion of the work and a justification for any proposed reassigned time and/or travel essential to the project. Describe the intended use of the results of the proposed project, including a projected outlet for the publication, grant proposal, exhibition, or performance resulting from the proposed project.
- *Qualifications:* Briefly state the proposer's qualifications to conduct this project.

H. Project Budget: Prepare a proposed budget for the project that includes brief justifications and total request amounts for each category below:

- *Course Reassigned Time* (cost for replacement faculty) (\$4,096 for a 3-hour undergraduate course)
- *Equipment* (items with useful life of more than one year and a unit acquisition cost of \$250.00 or more)
- *Materials and Supplies* (itemize)
- *Travel Expenses* (itemize and use state accounts allowable expense rates)
- *Other Expenses* (itemize)
- *Total ORCA Request:* (provide a total of all expenses listed in 1 -5 above)

I. Applicant's Qualifications (Vita or Resume):

J. Appendices (Limit 10 files or pages) This section should provide any supporting documentation needed for Part II above, e.g., a biography of the applicant, bibliography, previous publications relating to the project....

K. Describe any previous ORCA funding you have received including the year.

L. Did you submit a final report for each of the previous years of funding? (Please note, that if you have an outstanding report, you are ineligible).

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria for Evaluating Proposal

Use the following criteria to determine the degree to which an applicant has justified why they should be awarded.

Evaluate the following criteria on the respective accompanying scales. The higher the number, the higher your evaluation. Then sum the points and rank your evaluations in order of your total scores from most to least points.

Required Qualifications				
1. Title page format and content.	Yes	No		
2. Project description, budget, and necessary appendices.	Yes	No		
3. Conceptualization of the problem.	0	1	2	3
4. Clarity of objectives.	0	1	2	3
5. Adequacy of design or implementation of the plan.	0	1	2	3
6. Initiate new or major research or creative activity.	0	1	2	3

List any references or supporting documents.

PS 10.A.28 Internal Grants and Awards for Faculty

Version History

Version	Date	Description of Change	Author
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