

Provost PhD Program Award Request for Proposals

Submission Deadline: Friday, 7 October 2016, 5 pm

Purpose

These competitive program awards provide supplemental graduate funding to Mason PhD programs to strategically invest in our strongest doctoral programs. Specifically, awards will be given to PhD programs with the greatest demonstrated potential to compete with the top programs in their disciplines and to high-potential start up programs. The primary intent of this award is to assist the programs' efforts to strengthen standing and profile especially, although not exclusively, through recruitment and retention. The majority of awarded funding is expected to go toward competitive support packages, though other means of student support for program building may be included.

Award

Awards range from \$50,000 to \$150,000 annually for up to three years of continuous supplemental funding. Funding can take the form of first and second year *research* stipends, stipend "top offs" to reach competitive levels, tuition grants, doctoral completion grants, and other modes of student support. A budget and budget justification is required in the proposal.

Eligibility

PhD programs that are currently active or have received SCHEV approval by the proposal submission date are eligible to apply. To be eligible (and to maintain eligibility if selected for funding), programs must be in good standing with the university's Academic Program Review process.

In cases where PhD programs have distinct concentrations, a specific concentration within the doctoral program may apply. In such cases, the concentration application will stand for the program application.

Selection

A committee will review proposals and make award recommendations to the Provost. This committee will be chaired by the Associate Provost for Graduate Education and include faculty members who represent diverse disciplines and who are familiar with doctoral education programs.

Period of the Award

Awards will be announced by 4 November 2016, allowing programs time to recruit for the Fall 2017 semester. Award funding will be available Fall 2017. Funding will be available for up to three years from start date and are contingent upon an annual program progress review.

Review Criteria

Successful program proposals will not exceed **12 single-spaced pages** and should address five key sections.

Note: In addition to the following materials, proposals from **programs seeking renewal** of funding through the Provost PhD Award should also include a sixth section (not to exceed **two pages**) containing specific information regarding:

- Efforts supported with the first three years of funding.
- Information that supports realized success in terms of how the first three years of Provost funding has helped strengthen the program.
- Student and/or faculty presentations, publications, grants, fellowships, honors, and awards resulting from and/or associated with the previous award's funding.

Key Sections

1. A profile of the current Mason program (not to exceed **four pages**). The narrative should include any and all markers of success pertinent to the discipline, including but not limited to current and projected:
 - Number of students enrolled in the program.
 - Student support, including specific information about the number of students supported by sponsored funding; average level of support.
 - Retention rates.
 - Time to degree.
 - Student success while in the program (e.g., publications, grants, honors, awards, scholarships, academic conference and invited presentations, etc.). Please provide citations and note whether students are currently in the program or recent alumni (up to five years). If available, please include information regarding % of dissertations that result in at least one peer-reviewed publication.
 - Post-graduate placement (up to 10 years).
 - Statement of faculty strength and productivity, including a description of what defines faculty strength for the discipline.
 - Program rankings.
2. A description of a top PhD program (i.e., nationally ranked and/or an aspirational program) in the discipline (not to exceed **one page**).
3. A clear plan (not to exceed **four pages**) specifying:
 - How this award will increase the program's profile (e.g., increase in comparative rankings, national and international reputation, etc.).
 - How this award will increase the program's ability to receive external funding for graduate student support.
 - How funds will be incorporated into a long-term, sustainable plan for the program. This narrative should include a discussion of program goals (next five, 10 years), how these goals are aligned with relevant sections of Mason's Strategic Plan, a plan for right sizing (if applicable), and multi-disciplinary collaborations.
 - How progress towards stated programmatic goals will be assessed.
4. A budget and budget justification (not to exceed **two pages**). This section should include a statement with four distinct sections:

- Amount of graduate support requested annually for up to three years; requests cannot be higher than \$150,000 per academic year.
 - How that money would supplement current funding. Detail current support that the program receives from the Dean, central administration, external funds, other.
 - Specific goals and advances that the program will make with this funding award after the first, second, and third year of funding.
 - A table that shows the graduate assistantship stipend level currently offered to doctoral students as compared to those offered by at least three other competitive schools. Please state the level of stipend needed to recruit competitively.
5. A Dean or Director's letter of support **MUST** be included (not to exceed **one page**). This letter should address the achievability of the proposed programs gains and the Dean/Director's commitment to continue to provide graduate support packages at least at the current levels throughout the period of the award.

Important notes:

- Faculty CVs are **NOT** to be included.
- Proposals will be reviewed based on clarity of the plan as stated, achievability of program goals, measurable markers established to assess the program's progress, and the program's ability to sustain its quality post-award.
- Proposals should address how success will be tracked both in terms of the use of awarded funds and the program's overall plan to raise its long-term profile. Recipients will be required to report annually on these metrics.
- The Office of Institutional Research & Reporting will provide the review committee with program information on PhD production, GRE scores, time-to-degree, and completion rates. A copy of this information may be requested from Amy Gillies, agillie3@gmu.edu, after 19 September 2016. Copies of previous award-winning proposals may also be requested, however the RFP requirements beginning in 2015 are different from those of previous years'.

Award Program Contact:

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