



## **FIA SEED GRANT FAQ**

### **WHAT IS IT?**

The Seed Grant program is designed to encourage small teams of students to engage in research projects that would lead the way to innovative solutions for key information-related challenges. Students work in teams of three to five together with faculty mentors. Each project should feature connections for collaboration and adoption outside the university.

### **WHAT KINDS OF TOPICS ARE APPROPRIATE?**

Proposals should identify specific research and development goals and explain how these relate to one or more of the following “10 Priorities for the Future of Information,” described on the FIA website at [www.fia.umd.edu/priorities/](http://www.fia.umd.edu/priorities/):

#### **10 Priorities for the Future of Information**

##### **Privacy**

How can private information be secure in a networked world?

##### **Credibility**

How can we identify accurate information and reliable sources?

##### **InfoEquity**

Can the digital divide be reduced to foster opportunity for all?

##### **InfoLiteracy**

How can knowledge about evolving resources be improved?

##### **Culture**

How can different cultures better understand each other?

##### **Transparency**

How can barriers to information about government be reduced?

##### **Finances**

What business models will support content creation and access?

##### **Collaboration**

How can research across disciplines help tackle the big issues?

### **InfoTransfer**

How can expert information be translated for broad use?

### **Emergence**

How can people use available tools together to aid humankind?

## **DO PROPOSALS HAVE TO BE RELATED TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY?**

They do not. We expect that there will be interest in projects with a technology focus, but this is by no means a requirement. The evolving landscape of information-related problems and opportunities is broad enough to encompass a wide variety of topics, and we are especially interested in proposals that take advantage of the interests, knowledge and experience of team members from multiple disciplines.

## **WHAT SHOULD BE IN A PROPOSAL?**

Each proposal should include the following:

- 1) Cover Page with the following elements:
  - a. Title of Project
  - b. Names of all Team Members and Faculty Mentor (specify department, college and student status and faculty position)
  - c. Identity of Potential Outside Partner (with contact information)
  - d. 150-word Abstract – summarizes the proposed project
  - e. Signatures – of each team member and mentor
- 2) Proposed Research (three to five single-spaced pages, not counting citations) including:
  - a. Project Motivation: The rationale for project, including its relevance to one or more FIA priorities and to the FIA's mission of facilitating a future in which information in all its forms can be effective resource for everyone. (See FIA Priorities listed above.)
  - b. Project Description: Include approach, timelines, expected outcomes, and how such outcomes might be evaluated.
  - c. Innovation: Each proposal should make clear the ways in which the project and its intended outcomes would be innovative.
  - d. Outside Partner Role: Make clear how and why the project will be of interest and relevance to a collaborating FIA partner. Connecting with the potential partner prior to submitting the proposal is not required, but is strongly suggested and should be described in your proposal. (Connect with FIA for opportunities to meet the partners.)
- 3) Additional Information including:
  - a. Citations, including full titles.
  - b. Project Budget, including details of expected expenditures
  - c. Resumes of Team Members (up to two pages per person)
  - d. CV of Faculty Mentor (up to three pages, with link to full CV)

- e. Brief narrative bio (no more than one page per person) of team members and faculty mentor that will help the judges understand the context for the project in connection with interests and background of team members.

All individuals considering taking part in the Seed Grant Competition are urged to attend the Seed Grant Kickoff event on September 29, 2014, from 2-4pm in the Special Events Room at McKeldin Library, to hear partner pitches, network with FIA partners and fellow students, and to form teams. All participating teams are encouraged to attend the Coaching and Pitch Clinic on October 20, 2014, 1-5 pm at the FIA Suite in McKeldin Library. FIA staff will provide advice and all team members will have a chance to learn to create a great grant application and practice their short pitches.

### **HOW WILL THE APPLICATIONS BE JUDGED?**

Written proposals will be evaluated by members of the FIA's Brainstorming Board and the FIA Directors. The in-person presentations by semi-finalists will be judged by an interdisciplinary group of scholars and innovators together with the FIA Directors. There will be five criteria for judges to review team projects:

1. **Team Composition and Capability**  
Each team must be interdisciplinary in nature with student representatives from two or more colleges. Team members and mentors should demonstrate a background that indicates their ability to succeed with their intended project.
2. **Overall Project Quality and Innovation**  
Each proposal should contain enough detail to make clear that it has been carefully designed and that it has innovative elements in its topic, approach and/or expected outcome.
3. **Relevance to FIA Priorities**  
Each proposal will be judged on its relevance to one or more FIA "Priorities for the Future of Information" and its likelihood of advancing the FIA's overall mission of facilitating a future in which information in all its forms can be effective resource for everyone.
4. **Connection and Relevance to Outside Collaborating Partner**  
Each proposal should make clear its relevance to one or more FIA Founding Partners and the likelihood that the partner or partners would be able to adopt, use or continue to develop the work of the team once the project is completed.
5. **Potential Real-World Impact of the Project**  
Each proposal should suggest how the project could eventually lead to innovation, adoption and impact in the real world.

### **HOW WILL EXPENSES BE REIMBURSED?**

Each seed grant proposal must include a budget identifying expenses for which reimbursement will be sought. Request for reimbursements will be made by faculty

mentors to the VPR business office. Any proposed expenditures beyond the written proposal must be approved in advance by the FIA Directors.

### **WHAT EXPENSES ARE ALLOWED?**

In general, necessary expenses related to the project might include the following: research supplies; purchase or rental of equipment for new research; travel relevant to the project.

### **WHAT EXPENSES ARE NOT ALLOWED?**

Salaries, wages or contracts for the performance of services (unless these are essential to the project and are explicitly approved in advance by the seed grant program administrators); general telephone services and postage; alterations or renovations of laboratory space; purchase of laboratory or office furniture; purchase or binding of periodicals and books; dues and memberships in scientific societies.

### **WHO CAN APPLY?**

Teams of three to five students with a faculty mentor may apply. Students must be enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program at the University of Maryland-College Park. The team must include students from more than one UMD college. Teams with a majority of grad students are encouraged but not required to include undergraduates. Each team member must be an active participant in the seed grant project. Each mentor must be a full-time faculty member at UMD-College Park.

### **HOW MANY SEED GRANTS WILL BE AWARDED, AND FOR HOW MUCH?**

Seed grants will be awarded to up to four teams. Each team will be awarded up to \$25,000, as follows: a \$3,000 stipend for each student on the team (for up to five students); \$7,000 for the faculty mentor on each team; and up to \$3,000 in expense reimbursements for each team.

### **CAN A PROJECT HAVE TWO FACULTY MENTORS?**

A seed grant project is permitted to have two faculty mentors. Both mentors would be designated Deutsch-FIA Faculty Fellows and would split the \$7,000 faculty stipend evenly.

### **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENTS WHO ARE GRANT RECIPIENTS?**

Students should expect to spend an average of eight hours a week on this research with their team. This will include meetings with team members, with the faculty mentor, and the outside collaborating FIA partner. Individual research, building of artifacts, and writing are also activities that may be undertaken.

All teams who are grant recipients are required to attend at least two coaching meetings with FIA advisers and experts during their work on the projects from December 2014 to May 2015. These meetings will take place during Seed Grant office hours, which will be announced separately.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF FACULTY MENTORS?**

Faculty will provide guidance, point to resources, and ensure that each team member is playing an active role in the project. Requests for expense reimbursements will also be the responsibility of the faculty mentor.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF OUTSIDE PARTNERS?**

Each team's outside collaborator or collaborators – from one or more of the 10 FIA Founding Partners (listed above) – will take part in periodic meetings and communication with the team. Partners will advise teams on potential research paths and applications for innovations that can have lasting impact and use.

## **ARE THERE ANY OTHER CONDITIONS?**

Yes, as follows:

- Seed grants are not transferable to individuals not named in the original proposals without prior approval in writing by the FIA Directors.
- Equipment purchased with seed grant funds shall become the property of FIA at the conclusion of the project.
- Each team should indicate in its proposal the name of one team member or the faculty mentor who will be at UMD during the subsequent academic year and will provide periodic updates throughout 2015 and 2016, on any activities related to the funded project that take place after the May, 2015 presentations.

## **WILL THIS PROGRAM BE OFFERED IN FUTURE YEARS?**

Stay tuned for updates on the FIA website about whether such grants will be offered to UMD students and faculty again.

## **WHOM CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?**

Please contact Tetyana Lokot, FIA-Deutsch Seed Grant Coordinator, at [fia@cs.umd.edu](mailto:fia@cs.umd.edu).

The Future of Information Alliance is co-directed by Professor Allison Druin, Chief Futurist at the University of Maryland Division of Research, and Associate Dean Ira Chinoy of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism. The FIA operates under the auspices of the Office of the Vice President for Research and is supported by the deans of all colleges and schools across campus as well as a broad-based campus advisory board.

**Learn more at [www.fia.umd.edu](http://www.fia.umd.edu)**