

Research & Starter Grant Guidelines

These guidelines apply to the management of and use of internal research grants and starter grants.

Definitions / Overview

Starter or Startup Grant: An internally funded grant, distinct to a specific faculty member, awarded to tenure-track faculty at time of hire. These grants are meant to provide substantive funding during the faculty member's probationary period to enable them to hit the ground running and advance their scholarship, teaching, and professional development during their early years at Smith. Funds are made available the first day of employment. Large startup grants are typically spread over 2+ years, with a certain amount made available each year.

Faculty with starter grant funding are not eligible for core CFCD¹ research & teaching funding (currently an annual allocation) until they have exhausted their starter grants. For this reason, starter grant funding is kept separate from all other funding sources. They remain fully eligible to apply for student research assistance grants, Connections Fund grants, and all endowed research and curricular fellowships and grants [overseen by CFCD](#). They are also fully eligible for any departmentally-funded grants for research, teaching, and professional development.

Once their starter is spent, they become immediately and fully eligible for CFCD.

Research Grant: An internally-funded grant, usually distinct to a specific faculty member.² Faculty members may receive research funding from a variety of sources (e.g. PI indirects from an external grant; serving as a chair or director; participating in certain special initiatives), but once transferred into the research fund, all funding is subject to the same guidelines regardless of initial funding source.

In some cases, faculty members who are awarded particularly large research grants may become ineligible for CFCD until their research grant is expended. If so, this will be stipulated in the letter awarding them the funding. Otherwise, availability of research funding does not affect standard eligibility for CFCD funding. Because of this, research funding is kept separate from starter grant funding. Availability of research funding may affect the Committee's decision to award supplemental or application-based funding.

Attributes of both research and starter funds: All funding is college funding and is subject to all relevant college policies and guidelines.

Funds are typically associated with a single faculty member; the grants and funding are informally referred to as "belonging" to that faculty member, but ownership is solely reserved for Smith College, and funds are overseen and administered by the [Provost's Office](#).

¹ Committee on Faculty Compensation & Development: elected faculty committee that oversees, among other things, internal faculty research/teaching/professional development grant funding.

² In certain cases, research grants are occasionally awarded to staff members. For simplicity's sake, this document will refer to "faculty" only but will apply to all college employees who receive internally-funded research funding. Staff members with research funding who have questions about eligible expenses or other ways in which this policy applies to them are encouraged to contact Saari Greylock. Staff members are not eligible for CFCD and do not receive starter grants.

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In the current system (Banner), all funds are designated by a six-character number, known as a "fund": research and starter grants are all **224xxx**.

See below on departmentally-funded / Kahn research grants.

The Authorized Signer for all expenses is the associate provost. Faculty cannot approve expenditures from their own funds. Department chairs/program directors cannot approve expenditures from faculty starters/research funds.

Unexpended balances carry forward across fiscal years and may be spent at any time during the faculty member's employment at the college.

Research/starter funding belonging to faculty members whose employment end for reasons other than retirement will be retrieved by the Provost's Office at that time to support other faculty research needs.

At this time, research funding belonging to faculty members who retire will be allowed to carry forward, and the emeriti may continue to draw on those research funds for eligible professional expenses until expended.

Access / Expenditures

Eligible Expenses: Broadly speaking, starter and research funds support the research, teaching, and professional development of faculty. Expenses should be professional in nature, not personal, and must comply with all relevant collegewide policies as designated by the [Controller's Office](#), [Budget Office](#), [Purchasing Office](#), [IRB](#), etc., and with state or federal law as applicable.

See the Appendix for common eligible and ineligible expenses encountered by faculty. See also the Controller's Office's [Reimbursable & Non-Reimbursable Quick Reference Guide](#).

For any research or teaching that involves human subjects (non-discipline-specific: includes interviews, surveys, oral histories, etc.), faculty **must obtain IRB approval** (or a determination that approval is not necessary) **before conducting the work**. Failure to do so may result in funding being withheld or other sanctions as appropriate.

Anything purchased with college funding is the property of the college and must be returned to the college if the faculty member's employment ends. This is particularly applicable to purchases of equipment and technology but applies to all purchases made with starter or research funding.

Reimbursement: Funds are available primarily on a reimbursement basis: the faculty member incurs an expense and submits to the Provost's Office for reimbursement, which is direct-deposited to the bank account they have on record with the college. This process may take between 1-3 weeks depending on when the paperwork is received, time of year, etc.

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For all travel- and entertainment-related costs (including all meals), submit the [Expense Reimbursement Report](#). You may also use the Expense Reimbursement Report for any and all non-travel or entertainment expenses, but it is not required.

For non-travel- and entertainment-related expenses, you may choose to submit the [Accounts Payable Voucher](#) instead.

Attach original receipts for all expenses. Copies/xeroxes are not acceptable, and credit card statements should only be submitted as a last resort if the original receipt was lost. If the original receipt was digital, a printout is considered 'original.' If the receipt is smaller than a page of paper (e.g. restaurant receipts, taxi receipts), tape it to a blank white piece of paper to enable scanning; you may tape as many receipts to a single piece of paper as you can fit while ensuring they are still legible. If you were unable to obtain a receipt or lost it, you may submit a log or diary of expenses (what, when, where, how much); if the expenses was over \$25 you must submit a [Missing Receipt Affidavit](#) for each expense.

Attach the original receipts to the completed form with a paperclip (no staples) and send to Saari Greylock, Provost's Office, College Hall 206. In most circumstances, emailed reimbursement requests will not be accepted.

Reimbursements should normally be submitted **within 30 days of the expense being incurred**. If the expense is more than 150 days old, and especially if the expense fell in a previous fiscal year, the Controller's Office may decline to reimburse it. The Controller may consult with Provost Office staff, but has the final authority on whether an expense is reimbursable.

Technology: Purchases of technological / computer equipment and accessories **MUST** be made through the [Computer Store](#) to ensure compatibility with campus system/software requirements and to enable the purchase to be asset-tagged. The staff will charge the purchase directly to the faculty member's fund (no out-of-pocket costs; no tax charged; no reimbursement needed).

Payments to outside vendors: If you hire an individual or business to perform professional services for you, you should have them invoice you and submit paperwork to have them paid directly, rather than to pay them and request reimbursement. Failure to do so may have tax implications.

Example: You hire a professional to proofread and index your book before publication: the indexer invoices you upon completion of the work. You submit an **Accounts Payable Voucher** made out to the indexer (not to you) along with the invoice. The college pays the indexer directly, and reports the payment to the IRS as taxable income to the indexer.³

³ Please note that if hiring a person to do any work that occurs on campus additional insurance and liability processes may apply: contact the Purchasing Office to inquire.

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Example: You purchase a large piece of equipment from a company. You will need to submit a Purchase Order to the Purchasing Office in order to place the order. Once the equipment is delivered, submit the AP Voucher and invoice for payment to the vendor.

If the college has not paid the vendor before, we will need a completed and signed [W-9](#) (for U.S. entities), [W-8BEN](#) (for non-U.S. persons), or [W-8BEN-E](#) (for non-U.S. businesses) submitted along with the invoice and AP voucher. If you are not sure if the vendor is in our system, contact Susanne Kiley (skiley@smith.edu) to inquire.

Normally vendors are paid via check. Wire transfers are discouraged unless absolutely necessary, but when a wire transfer is necessary (e.g. the payment must be in a foreign currency), you must also submit a [wire transfer form](#), and the starter/research grant will be charged an **additional fee, currently \$25.00**, that is incurred by the college for the transaction. Be sure to mark clearly on your AP voucher that the payment is a wire transfer.

If you are not sure whether you should pay an expense yourself and get reimbursed, or have it invoiced and pay the vendor directly, please contact Saari Greylock (x3007) or the Accounts Payable staff (x2229).

Departmentally-funded and Kahn Research Grants

Some departments have funds (typically endowments) that provide additional support for faculty research. In most cases, the funds are disbursed directly from the endowment, but in a few cases departments set up faculty-specific grants to which they transfer funding.

- These funds are designated in the **655xxx** range
- The department chair is typically the authorized signer for expenditures
- Payments do not need to be sent to the Provost's Office for review or approval
 - *Exception:* In cases where the chair is the recipient, reimbursements should be sent to the associate provost for signature.
- Some grants may be for a specific period of time (e.g. one fiscal year); others may be allowed to carry forward across fiscal years
- All expenditures must adhere to overarching college policies where applicable (e.g. the Travel & Entertainment Policy)
- **Contact:** Your department chair or academic assistant

The Kahn Institute also provides research funding to faculty who have participated in Kahn projects. These funds are set up separately from regular internal research funds and managed directly by the Kahn.

- Older grants are in the **224xxx** range; newer grants are in the **655xxx** range
- The Kahn Director or her delegate is the authorized signatory and must sign off on all payments/reimbursements
- Payments do not need to be sent to the Provost's Office for review or approval
- Grants are awarded for a certain period of time, after which unspent balances revert to the Kahn Institute
- **Contact:** Elizabeth Hait, Administrative Coordinator: ehait@smith.edu, x3721

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Contact

Saari Greylock, Senior Academic Budget Manager: sgreylock@smith.edu, x3007

For all inquiries or questions, particularly if you are unsure if an expense is eligible or if you have an unusual situation.

Susanne Kiley, Grants and Academic Budget Assistant: skiley@smith.edu.

For inquiries about reimbursements, reimbursement status, current grant balances, whether a vendor is in the system, general policies and requirements.

APPENDIX: Eligible / Ineligible Expenses

COMMON ELIGIBLE EXPENSES	INELIGIBLE EXPENSES
Professional memberships	Childcare [considered by IRS to be compensation]
Professional travel: includes conferences, research, lectures, performances, workshops ⁴	Business class airfare
Conference/workshop registration fees	Travel expenses for spouses or dependents
Meals while traveling outside the Five College area on business (conferences, research, etc.) ⁵	Gift cards ⁶
Lodging while traveling outside the Five College area on business (conferences, research, etc.)	Additional salary or stipends to yourself or other Smith employees
Journal page fees, publication subventions	Regular commuting costs
Permission / copyright fees, image fees	Moving expenses
Computer equipment, hardware, software ⁷	Cell phones, cell service, related costs
Books, journal subscriptions ⁸	Donations or contributions
Professional services: editing, copyediting, indexing, website creation, etc.	Meals while traveling in the Five College area
Photocopying or specialty printing (e.g. materials at an archive; conference posters)	Personal items (clothing, luggage, consumables)
Research supplies	
Equipment for research or teaching	
Student research assistance (wages)	
Student conference travel or research supplies	
Professional research assistance ⁹	
Academic regalia (allowed once only)	
Survey participant incentives ¹⁰	

This is not a complete list of eligible/ineligible expenses. If you have a question, contact Saari Greylock.

⁴ Economy/coach-class airfare only. Faculty who wish to upgrade may pay for the difference.

⁵ Normal maximum = \$90/day for all meals.

⁶ See "Survey participant incentives" for further detail

⁷ Equipment/accessories **MUST** be purchased through the Computer Store. Includes upgrades of FCAP-provided machines. Consult with Educational Technology Services before purchasing software / subscriptions, as campuswide licenses or institutional discounts may already be available.

⁸ Check whether the Libraries already subscribe to a given journal before purchasing individual subscriptions.

⁹ Usually through a temp agency: contact Saari to discuss if applicable

¹⁰ In most circumstances, gift cards or cash gifts are not allowable and may not be purchased with college funding. In the case of **IRB-approved** research or teaching studies in disciplines where paying study participants with gift cards or cash gifts is the professional norm, and where the situation warrants it, such purchases may be allowed. Proof of IRB approval and certain documentation must be submitted: contact Saari for more information.