Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting SEA Proposals

Student Engagement Awards (SEA) fund the direct costs of engaging students in meaningful experiential learning experiences. Projects dealing with research, creative production, and service/outreach initiatives that align with the mission and strategic priorities of the University have been funded in recent years. All students supported by SEA grants MUST participate in the Annual Student Scholarship Expo.

The Office of Sponsored Programs uses the following definitions for research and creative production when assessing proposals.

- **Research** is a "systematic investigation, including development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge"[1]. "Generalizable Knowledge means that (1) conclusions are drawn from particular instances and (2) the information from the investigation is to be disseminated."[2]
- **"Creative production** refers to the process of transforming ideas and concepts into tangible and expressive forms of content. It involves combining artistic skill, technical expertise, and a deep understanding of the desired outcomes."[3]

1) https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-45/subtitle-A/subchapter-A/part-46/subpart-A/section-46.102
2) https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/generalizable-knowledge
3) https://www.wrike.com/blog/diving-into-creative-production/

SEA application process and deadlines: Proposals **must be submitted using DocSoup.** *There are two deadlines annually for these award programs. During the Fall semester, applications must be submitted by **5:00 pm on the Friday before Fall Break begins**, and during the Spring semester, applications are due by **5:00 pm on the Friday before Spring Break begins**. Please inform your supervisor of your planned submission before the due date. The supervisor's approval is due by 7:00 pm on the following Thursday.*

To gain a greater understanding of the emphases of each program **please review the current Evaluation Rubric** for the program of interest. The rubrics are used by the reviewers to score proposals and make award decisions.

A complete application package will consist of the following items:
1. The completed DocSoup Internal Grant Application (Access DocSoup via carta.bradley.edu/docsoup/ → *login* → Sponsored Programs → External Proposal Transmittal).
   The Information requested on the form includes:
   1. Award program to which you are applying
   2. The applicant's name, department, college, and contact information (e-mail address, phone, etc.).
   3. The names, titles, and contact information of any other faculty or staff serving on the project
   4. The name and contact information for the project leader's immediate supervisor (e.g., chair, dean, director, vice president, etc.)
   5. A detailed budget that includes the total amount requested from OSP and the amounts requested in each budget category
   6. If applicable, a list of other funding sources for the proposed project and the individual who is responsible for approving the use of the funds.
   7. An approximate start date and the number of months of support is requested (Maximum is 18 months). **Note:** The review process may take more than one month.
   8. Project Title
   9. A **1000-character** abstract summarizing the merits and the anticipated benefits/outcomes of the project – the abstracts for funded projects will be posted on the OSP website.
   Note: *DocSoup is not compatible with some special characters including slanted single quotes [']. **You cannot cut and paste text from another program if it contains special characters.** You must enter the special characters manually within DocSoup. If the text you have entered will not save, incompatible special characters are the most common cause. Exceeding the character limit within entry boxes is another identified cause for documents not saving correctly.*

Attach a SINGLE pdf file of the documents listed in items 2-7 as supplemental material within DocSoup. The supervisor letter may be a separate document.

2. **Project Description** (six pages maximum):
   - The project description must include the headings listed below (bold text, **letters a-j**) and any additional information necessary for reviewers to evaluate the proposal (see rubrics for more details).
   - Your proposal will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary group of your colleagues, not experts in your field; therefore, it **MUST** be written for an *EDUCATED GENERALIST AUDIENCE*. If discipline-specific jargon is used, clearly define it. If possible, use examples or analogies related to everyday experiences to help the reviewers understand the proposed project. We all can write proposals that only experts in our field can understand, but proposals for the SEA program **MUST** be approachable to a broader audience. Proposals that fail to achieve this goal, will be returned without review.
   - One-inch margins and 11 pt. or larger font must be used (images, charts, or tables may use a smaller font). Failure to follow the proposal guidelines will result in the proposal not being reviewed.
     a) **Project Merits and Objective(s):** Summarize the purpose, value, merits, and objectives of the proposed activity. Also include a summary of the work that has been previously completed by the grant seeker and others on this or similar projects.
     b) What **Qualifications**/**Expertise** does the project team bring to the project?
     c) **Methods/Workplan:** Describe the methods/workplan that will be used to achieve the objective(s).
     d) **Timeline/Gantt Chart:** Provide a timeline for completing the objective(s).
     e) **Outcomes**: How will the results from the project be disseminated? How will the provided funding strengthen future applications for external funding to continue the project or related projects? Are there other benefits specific to your discipline that will be achieved through this work?
     f) **Student Engagement Plan***:* Describe the plan for engaging students meaningfully in the project.
        - Describe how you will identify and select the student(s)? If the student(s) have already been selected to work on the project, describe their qualifications.
        - How will you mentor/guide/train the student(s)?
        - What tasks will the student(s) undertake and accomplish?
        - What are the anticipated student outcomes/benefits from their engagement in the project? Examples: disciplinary skills/techniques, transferrable skills (e.g., time management, teamwork)
        - What dissemination opportunities will they have? **(Don't forget to include participation in the Student Scholarship Expo.)**
     g) **Student Outcome Measurement(s)**: How will student progress/development be monitored? How will the student outcomes/benefits be assessed?
     i) If applicable, **Plan for Securing CUHSR** (human subjects) or **IACUC** (animal studies) **Approvals**: While these approvals need not be in place at the time of submission, they MUST be secured before an award is executed. Failure to secure appropriate approvals may result in the award being rescinded.
     j) If applicable, **Results from Prior Awards**: Please provide an update on the outcomes/progress made on work funded by prior OSP awards within the last five years. The committee may also review reports that have been submitted for previous awards, especially if they relate to the current proposed project.

3. **References:** Only list citations used in your project description (no more than 1 page).

4. **Appendices/Attachments** beyond those listed below, or other visuals may be included, but they **will** count towards the six-page project description limit.

5. **Budget and Budget Justification**. See the separate budget and budget justification guidelines below.

6. A **Biographical Sketch/Resume/or short CV** (1-3 pages). Include references/highlights that relate to the project. If requesting student funding, please include student mentorship and engagement accomplishments to date (e.g., student co-authors/co-presenters, number of students mentored). Examples of formats include the NSF, NIH, and the resume outline used by the NEH (see page 9 of pdf).

7. *Optional:* Up to **two letters of commitment** (one page each) document other commitments or collaborations necessary for the project's success. Service or outreach projects are encouraged to provide letters from the agency/persons who will receive/benefit from the service/outreach.

8. A **Letter of Support/Endorsement from your Immediate Supervisor** (one-two pages) including any commitments of funds or resources from the department/unit for the project. *The letter can be attached by the supervisor to the application through DocSoup, or it can be included with the proposal. Regardless of which method is used, the supervisor will need to approve the application within DocSoup.*

Note: The budget and budget justification, references cited, biographical sketches, and letters do not count toward the six-page project description limit.

Budget and Budget Justification Guidelines

The applicant's budget and budget justification are used in the review process, as described in each Program's Evaluation Rubric. Applicants are encouraged to give the budget and budget justification as much attention as they do their project description. Applicants must provide:

1) An **itemized budget** (table format or itemized list) that uses the headings found in the list of allowable costs with an itemized breakdown of each category. ($6,000 is the budget limit for the SEA Program)

2) A separate **budget justification** (narrative) describing why each line item is necessary for the project's success and include a brief explanation for how each amount was determined (calculations, quotes, vendor websites, etc.). ***Do not include the actual quotes, webpages, etc.***

Allowable Costs:	Unallowable costs:
Undergraduate or Graduate project associate wages: Compensation at an hourly rate for current, degree-seeking Bradley University undergraduate and graduate students, regardless of enrollment modality, to facilitate their engagement on the project.	Compensation for students who are not current, degree-seeking Bradley University students Funding for graduate assistantships or tuition (To clarify, you may pay students an hourly rate to work on the project, but you may not use the funds to provide a portion of a graduate assistantship or pay any portion of the student's tuition or fees.) Stipends for faculty or staff Compensation for external research collaborators/presenters/co-authors
Consultants/contractual services: Services necessary for the proposed project (e.g., interpretation or translation services, transcription or annotation services, printing costs, or use/submission of samples to another facility for testing.	
Participant Costs: Costs related to involving human subjects in a study, such as participation incentives, fees for the purchase/use of a survey instrument or assessment tool, or other costs that are directly related to the involvement of human subjects an approved study.	
Course Release: Costs that will be incurred by the department or unit to cover the course release.	
Materials and Supplies: Items required to conduct the project (e.g., expendable materials and supplies that are less than $5,000) that are covered or provided by the department/unit. Do not use this line item to just replenish departmental stock.	Publication costs Routine costs (secretarial, supplies, etc.) that are a standard line item in departmental/center/college budgets
Equipment or Instrumentation: Funds may be used to purchase capital equipment (items with a value greater than or equal to $5,000) that falls beyond the ordinary scope of departmental, divisional, center, or college funding. Such items are the property of the University but will be housed in the department or center of the award recipient once the funded project period is over. Applicants must justify why the award should cover such expenses rather than the departmental, center, or college.	
Travel: Funds may be used to support travel costs (excluding meals) required for the performance of the project (fieldwork, access to archives, service sites, etc.).	Any travel that is not required to conduct the proposed project – This includes conference or professional meeting attendance Meal expenses or other food costs unless such items are required to conduct the proposed research project

Additional notes related to the budget:

- **It is the expectation of OSP that students supported by SEA grants will earn at least Illinois' state minimum wage rate, unless a lower hourly rate is justified.**
- **University Policy:** Students cannot receive both compensation and course credit for the same effort. Students may receive compensation if the duties are in addition to their course work as students. There must be a clear delineation between the course work and the duties being performed for compensation. Work duties versus course assignments must be specifically documented and there can be **no** overlap of responsibilities or the appearance thereof.
- It is uncommon for the total budget request to exactly equal the maximum allowed award if actual values are used for budget calculations. More commonly, budgetary needs will exceed the maximum award limit.
- **If the budget exceeds the allowable limit,** you must list the other funding sources that will be used to achieve the project's objectives and indicate which line items will be covered by other sources (i.e., department or college resources, external grant funding, etc.) However, it is not enough to list all of the project costs and indicate that a percentage of the total cost will be covered by another funding source.
- Costs that could be construed as standard costs and typically covered through departmental or college budgets must be justified. Supervisors should verify that such expenses are outside the scope of the departments/unit's or college/division's budgetary allocations.

BRADLEY University

Office of Sponsored Programs
Student Engagement Award (SEA) Evaluation Rubric

Student Engagement Awards (SEA) are available to fund the direct costs associated with engaging students in meaningful experiential learning experiences. Projects dealing with research, scholarship, creative production, and service/outreach initiatives have been funded in recent years. All proposals will be evaluated on the strength of the proposed plan to engage students in meaningful experiences beyond the classroom and the scholarly merits of the proposed activity. Applicants must be mindful of the following rubric when preparing an application, because the reviewers will use the rubric to score the proposal.

○ Yes or ○ No   **Proposal guidelines were followed.** (If no, the proposal will not be reviewed.)

○ Yes or ○ No   **Letter(s) of support/commitment were provided.** (If no, the proposal will not be reviewed.)

○ Yes or ○ No   **Is a plan for engaging the students in meaningful ways provided?** (If no, the proposal will not be reviewed.)

○ Yes or ○ No   **Does the project involve using human subjects or animals?**

○ Yes or ○ No   If applicable, **was a plan for securing CUHSR (IRB) or IACUC approvals provided?** (If no, the proposal will not be reviewed.)

Criteria	Very Strong (3 pts.)	Strong (2 pts.)	Adequate (1 pt.)	Weak (0 pts.)
Project Merit & Objectives	The purpose, value, merits and objectives of the project are clear and well-justified. It is evident why students will benefit from engagement in the project.	Few questions remain as to the project's purpose, value, merits, and objectives, but could probably be resolved with follow-up.	The purpose, value, merits, and objectives, of the project are stated, but not well-justified. The project may need to be better established before engaging students in it.	The purpose, value, merits, and objectives of the project are not clearly stated nor justified.
Qualifications/ Expertise	There is no doubt that the team is well qualified to conduct the project.	Few questions remain regarding the team's qualifications	The proposal weakly addresses team qualifications/expertise.	The proposal does not directly address the qualifications or expertise of the project team.
Methodology/ Workplan	The methodology/work plan is well described and justified to a generalist audience and is well matched to project goals and outcomes.	Few questions remain, but may be due to unfamiliarity with the field, or could be resolved easily with follow-up from the applicant.	The plan is laid out, but larger questions remain as to how the methodology/work plan aligns with goals and outcomes.	The methodology/work plan is not clearly described – leaving the reviewer wondering what work will occur during the project period.
Timeline	The timeline clearly demonstrates how the project will progress and be completed within the project period.	Few questions remain as to whether the project can be conducted/completed within the project period.	The timeline is a bit vague, leaving some uncertainty as to whether the project can be completed in time.	The timeline is weak and does little to assure the reviewer that the project can be conducted/ completed in time.
Outcomes *May include a review of the outcomes/results of past awards received by the applicant.*	The outcomes from the project are clear and well connected to the work plan and the merits of the project.	Few questions remain about the outcomes, but these could be resolved with follow-up.	Larger questions remain about the outcomes, and they seem disconnected from the actual merits of the project.	The outcomes are not clear, nor do they seem reasonable or connected in any meaningful way to the merits of the project.
Student Engagement Plan	A clear engagement plan for involving students is provided, detailing plans for mentoring and guiding the students, as well as what they will accomplish through their engagement on the project.	Some questions about the student engagement plan remain, but could probably be resolved easily with follow-up from the project leader.	Larger questions remain about how students will be engaged meaningfully in the project (i.e., Why is this experience meaningful for them? How will they be mentored? What distinguishes this from a "work for hire" arrangement?)	The plan for engaging students in the project is weak, leaving the reviewer wondering what they will be doing during the project period, how they will be mentored, and whether their involvement be meaningful to them.
Student Outcome Measurement(s)	The assessment plan for determining the impact on student development is reasonable, appropriate, and well connected to the overall engagement plan.	Minimal follow up could help with understanding of how the assessment plan connects to the engagement plan and/or how it will help demonstrate success in producing meaningful outcomes for students.	The assessment plan is adequate but may not produce substantive insight into why the engagement plan worked or resulted in student outcomes and benefits.	The assessment plan is weak and raises questions about whether it will be effective in ascertaining the success of the engagement plan in producing meaningful student outcomes and benefits.
Budget and Justification	Costs are well-justified as reasonable and necessary to engage students meaningfully in the project.	Only a few questions remain regarding the budget, which could be easily resolved with follow-up from the applicant.	The budget and justification are complete, but questions remain as to how reasonable or necessary they are to engage students meaningfully in the project.	The budget and justification lack information or detail to ascertain whether costs are reasonable or necessary to engage students in the project.

Point value determined by the Office of Sponsored Programs, not the reviewers

Length of time since start date of last SEA (aka SE)	Four years or greater	Between four and three years	Between three and two years	Less than two years