



# STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION

*Information, Guidelines, and Grant Proposal Components*

(Revised Fall 2011)

## INTRODUCTION

Ball State University offers a variety of internal programs that support student projects. The University Research and Creative Arts Committees would like to encourage students to consider applying for a Student ASPiRE Grant. Funds can be provided to assist in project costs such as travel or supplies.

## MISSION

Ball State University's Internal Grants Program was created in 1965 to provide funding to faculty and students and to support and develop projects in the areas of research and creative endeavors. Since that time, the Internal Grants program had not undergone significant restructuring until Spring 2008. Based on recommendations from the Provost, the program was revamped entirely, including a name change to ASPiRE. The name ASPiRE is intended to promote research and creative endeavors at the graduate and undergraduate level.

The Office of the Provost furnishes the funds that are administered by the Sponsored Programs Office (SPO). Internal Grant Review Committees, nominated by the University Senate, views these awards as seed money to assist in the initiation, acceleration or redeployment of research and creative efforts, with the intent to strengthen a student's academic program.

## ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be enrolled at Ball State University, Burriss Laboratory School or the Indiana Academy as one of the following:

- Graduate Student
- Undergraduate Student
- Burriss High School Student - grades 11 or 12 (follow instructions/deadlines for Undergraduate Students)
- Indiana Academy High School Student - grades 11 or 12 (follow instructions/deadlines for Undergraduate Students)
  - While the instructions/deadlines are the same for Undergraduates and Burriss/Academy students, it should be noted that they are reviewed separately and are not in competition with each other.

## **ROLE OF THE MENTOR**

All ASPiRE student projects require the support of a faculty mentor or advisor.

- Ball State students must ask a BSU faculty member to serve as a mentor and to provide assistance in preparing the project application.
- Burris and Academy students must ask a school faculty member to serve as a project advisor. A BSU faculty member may also serve in conjunction with the school faculty member.

The mentor is someone who will be involved in the project as a teacher and guide. He or she can provide assistance with defining the scope of the project, determining the best research or creative methods to achieve the desired goals of the project, and suggest or help obtain resources to complete the project. In fact, many faculty mentors welcome students into their research laboratories and programs, and are willing to provide personal day-to-day guidance in the progress of research or creative activity.

### *TO THE STUDENT*

- Discuss the project with your mentor.
  - If your research is an extension of your mentor's, be sure to make a clear distinction on the unique contribution that your project proposes.
- Ask your mentor to review your proposal before you submit it.
- Ask your mentor what institutional resources are available to help complete your project.
- Request your required letter of support from your mentor during the initial project meetings with your mentor.
- Share your proposal with your mentor within the IRBNet system.

### *TO THE MENTOR*

- Be an active participant in the student's project.
- Review the guidelines for the required letter of support for the student (see page 6).
- Insist that you be allowed to review the proposal prior to submission.
- Sign off on your student's proposal in IRBNET as an "Advisor"
- Complete the University Clearance Sheet Process when routed by SPO.

## **RESEARCH PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

In general, projects submitted to the research competition involve a process of study or discovery that will produce new insights, theories, or will apply such knowledge to problem-solving within the discipline or in society. Results of research should be worthy of submission for publication in refereed journals and could serve as the foundation for an external funding application.

There are two competition pools for this program, the Graduate and the Undergraduate.

## **TYPES OF FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR THE RESEARCH COMPETITION**

Proposals are capped at \$500 for Graduate students and \$300 for Undergraduate, Burris, and Indiana Academy Students. Funds can be used for Supplies, Equipment, Expenses and Travel (S.E.E.T.) costs associated with research. Costs need to be itemized and justified and must follow accepted university accounting policies and procedures.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals must be submitted via IRBNet. Step-by-step instructions for registering and uploading proposals for IRBNet can be found in the appendices as well as at the following url:

<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/SPO/ASPiRE/IRBNetASPiREHelp.aspx>

A complete submission includes the ASPiRE Student Research Application Cover Sheet, proposal narrative (completed according to program guidelines), budget form and budget narrative, plus the required appendices.

### ❑ APPLICATION COVER SHEET (1 page)

Each grant program has its own Application Cover Sheet available in IRBNet. See the Appendix for steps to access the form.

**Proposal Narrative:** Limited to **Two** Pages; **Double-space** the text using no smaller than a size 11 font. Label the required sections as stated below and address each topic completely but concisely. Because review committees are comprised of members from a variety of disciplines, all proposals should be written in clear, non-technical language readily understood by an educated layperson. Material should be organized in such a way that a clear outcome of the project is readily discernable.

### ❑ PROJECT DESIGN

This section is intended to introduce the background and methodology of the project. Keeping within the two page limit, please address the following topics:

1. Executive summary - An overview of the proposed project and its significance.
2. Background information - The history of the idea, the current status of the research in this area, and a definition of terms needed to facilitate a lay reader's understanding of the project. Note: if your project is an extension of your mentor's research, you must make a clear distinction between your project and the unique contribution your research proposes.
3. Goals, objectives, and significance - A discussion of the scope of the project, focusing on the overall goals and specific objectives of the research. Material should be organized in such a way that a clear outcome of the project is readily discernable. Project significance should clearly delineate the anticipated impact in the field or on one's research agenda. Plans for dissemination, publication, or presentation
4. Research Methods & Timeline - An identification of research questions and a detailed description of the proposed project. Describe in detail the methods, procedures, steps or activities to be undertaken, and a timetable for completing the work. Overall, the goal of the research methods section is to outline what will happen during the course of the research and how it will lead to an outcome. The research methodology description should provide a reader with a clear mental picture of the proposed work.

Regardless of whether the research involves quantitative or qualitative methodology, a good description contains the following information:

- What research question(s) will the data propose to answer, or how will the defined inquiry be described?
- How will the data be collected and analyzed?
- If human subjects are to be involved, how will they be selected and why?
- What is the expected outcome or what further research questions may be prompted by the results?

#### ❑ BUDGET & BUDGET NARRATIVE

The goal of the budget section of the proposal is to identify the type and amount of funds required to carry out the project. There should be a clear connection between the budget items and their contribution to the proposed project.

**Budget Form** is available in IRBNet and should give total amounts for each category listed below (please round to the next highest whole dollar amount).

##### *Budget Form Category Definitions*

Personnel—*not allowable on student grants*

Contractual—*Non BSU agreements (including software licenses) and non BSU project consultants.*

Supplies, Materials, Minor Equipment--*Any supplies needed to complete the project. Supplies include: Office supplies, postage, software, laboratory supplies, books, etc.*

Travel--*Any expenses incurred during or directly related to travel: Airfare, lodging, mileage, per diem, etc.*

Participant Stipend--*Stipend to research subjects or project participants*

NOTE: Participant Incentives must be in line with the Controller's Office policy on awards, prizes, and stipends and **cannot be issued in the form of a gift card**. For details please see:

<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/Controller/Resources/APGI.aspx>

**Budget Narrative** is a word document generated by the applicant; maximum one page. Use the budget narrative section to:

- Give a complete explanation of the amounts listed on the Budget Form.
- Explain rationale for figures in budget itemization.
- Name the source of the contribution for the "BSU-Other" column (e.g. Department, College, External Grant, personal funds, etc.)

Please keep in mind the following when preparing the Budget and Budget Narrative.

- Student Awards may **NOT** pay salaries or wages.
- Provide sufficient detail regarding how various budget items were calculated and proposed budget amounts are justified.
- All equipment, tangible materials, and books purchased on a grant are property of the University.
- ASPiRE funds not encumbered or spent by the end of the project period will revert back to the ASPiRE Program.
- Mileage is based on current University rates:  
<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/Accounting/TravelInfo/TravelManual.aspx>

## ❑ PROPOSAL ATTACHMENTS

Please include the following required and optional materials as attachments to your proposal. These can be uploaded directly to IRBNet.

- Required:
  - Literature references (1 page maximum; use the format that is standard for publishing in your field.)
  - Letter of support from your faculty mentor. The letter of support should address the following issues:
    - The viability of the project.
    - How the project fits with the student’s academic progress.
    - Student’s ability to complete the project.
    - What role, if any, the student’s project plays in your own research.
  - Appendix of related materials (e.g., survey questions)
  - 1 page Curriculum Vitae for applicants and co-applicants
  
- Optional:
  - Additional letter(s) of support from collaborators or other agencies. (It is recommended that a letter of support be obtained if an outside agency is involved in any capacity.)
  - Glossary of Terms (1 page maximum). It is recommended that even though your proposal should be written for the educated lay person, it may be beneficial to the reviewer to refer to a glossary of terms used in the narrative or methodology.

## ❑ ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS

Occasionally, a proposal can be strengthened by the inclusion of Additional Support Materials. These include, but are not limited to, the following types of information.

- Examples of artwork, photographs, etc.
- Examples of previously published material.
- Anything else the review committee could use to evaluate the proposal.

## Submission

A complete proposal submission includes:

- ✓ ASPiRE Student Research Application Cover Sheet
- ✓ Proposal narrative, budget form, budget narrative, required appendices (curriculum vitae and letter of support, and optional appendices. These items should be uploaded onto IRBNet ([www.irbnet.org](http://www.irbnet.org)) and clearly labeled (i.e., Application Cover Sheet, Budget Narrative, etc.).
- ✓ Optional Additional Support Materials are also to be uploaded through IRBNet.

The submission deadline is noted for each grant on the SPO website; all materials are due in IRBNet by **5:00 p.m.** that day.

## Review Criteria for Competitions

All proposals are reviewed by the appropriate research subcommittee. Reviewers assign points and an overall rating (fund, possibly fund, do not fund) to the proposals prior to the review meeting. At the review meeting, those proposals that fall into the “possibly fund” category are discussed. Those that are clearly fund or do not fund are not discussed unless there is a specific issue raised by a member of the (sub)committee. Proposals are scored out of a possible 30 points - see below for exact criteria.

**Proposal Background (maximum of 5 points)**

Origin of idea or project  
Literature review

**Significance of Project (maximum of 10 points)**

Goal of proposal is clearly stated  
Benefits to discipline and practice  
Impact of expected outcome of the project  
Plans for dissemination, publication, or presentation

**Research Methods (maximum of 10 points)**

Project plan (e.g., development of creative design, or data collection and analytical procedure)  
Feasibility of project within time frame  
Use of resources and budget

**Adherence to Format (maximum of 5 points)**

Text is lucid and written in non-technical language  
Proposal narrative adheres to the format described in this guide  
Accuracy in grammar and spelling

**REVIEW PROCESS**

The University Research Committee is comprised of faculty members and students nominated by the University Senate. The Research Committee reviews the proposals submitted for the research program. The University Research Committee is divided into two subcommittees according to discipline:

- Subcommittee #1: Humanities, Arts, Music, and Architecture
- Subcommittee #2: Education, Business, and Social Sciences, Mathematical, Biological, Physical, Health & Applied Sciences

All proposals submitted will undergo the same review process.

- Administrative review by SPO, for:
  - Previous internal award documentation
  - Adherence to proposal submission guidelines
- Subcommittee Review by against Review Criteria (see below)
- Funding Recommendation – Subcommittees make suggestions for funding to the Director of SPO, who then makes the final funding decision based on availability of funds.

**AWARD DECISIONS**

After a funding decision is made, the applicant will receive an email from IRBNet indicating that a decision has been made. Upon receipt of this email, please log into your IRBNet account, open your submission package, and under the “Board Documents” section, you will find a letter explaining the action of the review committee. If the project is not recommended for funding, the decision letter may suggest ways to strengthen or improve the proposal, or suggest other funding sources. If the committee feels the proposal could be strengthened with minor changes, the applicant will be asked to revise and resubmit to a Spring competition.



**APPENDIX A:**  
**INSTRUCTIONS ON REGISTERING WITH IRBNet**

1. Go to <http://www.irbnet.org>. [Do not request a demo from this site; the demo is not for training purposes.]
2. Click on the 'New User Registration' link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
3. Create your username and password. This system does not interface with Ball State's system, but you may choose to use your BSU username and password if you like. Click 'Continue'.
4. Read and accept the Individual User Terms of Use.
5. To add your affiliation, type the word BALL into the search box. **Uncheck** 'Boards' and 'Sponsors' leaving only 'Research Institutions' checked. Click 'Display'. Select 'Ball State University, Muncie, IN' from the organization box. Click 'Continue'
6. Enter your contact information. Enter the email address at which you would like to receive communications through the IRBNet system (e.g. notification of ASPIRE decisions, communications from your research team or administrator). Click 'Continue'.
7. Review your provided information and edit as necessary. When you are satisfied, click 'Register'.

An email will be sent to the email address you provided in Step 6, with "IRBNet Activation Required" in the subject line. You will need to click on the link provided in this registration email in order to activate your account. Clicking on the link will take you to the IRBNet homepage.

**If you need further assistance with this process please contact ASPIRE at 765-285-1600 or [aspire@bsu.edu](mailto:aspire@bsu.edu).**

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **INSTRUCTIONS ON CREATING A NEW PROPOSAL**

1. Login to IRBNet ([www.irbnet.org](http://www.irbnet.org)). This will take you to the Project Manager page.
2. Click on the Create New Project button located on the left-hand side of your screen. Complete the required information fields. Click Continue.
3. You will now be on the Designer page. You can access this page at any time by clicking on the Designer button under the heading "Project Administration," located on the left side of your screen.  
In Step #1:
  - a. Select 'Ball State University ASPiRE Grant Program, Muncie, IN' from the 'Select a Library' drop-down menu.
  - b. In the 'Select a Document' drop-down menu, you will find the ASPiRE cover sheets and budget forms.
  - c. Select the ASPiRE Student Research Application Cover Sheet and click the 'Download' button
  - d. Save the form to your local machine and complete the form.
  - e. Please note: PDF forms may be completed, saved, and edited in Adobe Reader. Please see the following website to make sure that you have the most up to date version: [http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2\\_allversions.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2_allversions.html)
  - f. If you are a Mac user and are still unable to save adobe form fields after downloading Adobe Reader, please contact [aspire@bsu.edu](mailto:aspire@bsu.edu) to request a word document version of the forms.  
In Step #2:
  - a. Upload your completed documents by clicking on 'Add New Document'.
  - b. Select a Document Type from the drop-down menu that corresponds with the document you are uploading, and then click on the 'Browse' button to search for your document.
  - c. Then click on the 'Attach' button.
4. Share the proposal with your faculty mentor and (if applicable) other team members. Click the 'Share this Project' button located on the left-hand side of your screen. Click on the blue 'Share' link within the text to grant access to this proposal.
  - a. Select 'Ball State University, Muncie, IN' from the organization box. Click 'Select Organization'. [Note: if the individual is not affiliated with Ball State University, select the organization under which they registered with IRBNet.]
  - b. Search for registered users with whom you'd like to share this proposal (i.e., your faculty mentor, project team members, etc.). Grant each user a level of access:

- i. Full: user may add/edit/delete proposal documents, share the proposal with other users, and submit the proposal. ***Students must grant this level of access to their Faculty Mentors.***
    - ii. Write: user may add/edit/delete proposal documents, but cannot share the proposal with other users or submit the proposal.
    - iii. Read: user may only view proposal documents.
  - c. Selected users will be notified automatically via email that the proposal has been shared with them. You may enter comments to be included in this email in the 'Your Comments' section. Click 'Save'.
  - d. Note: If the individuals you are seeking are NOT in the list of registered users, please ask them to register with IRBNet. Instructions on registration may be found at: [http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/SPO/ASPIRE/~media/DepartmentalContent/SPO/pdfs/Compliance/registeringwithirbnet\\_aspire.ashx](http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/SPO/ASPIRE/~media/DepartmentalContent/SPO/pdfs/Compliance/registeringwithirbnet_aspire.ashx).
5. Sign the proposal. ***Applicants must sign the proposal before it is submitted.***
- a. Click on the Sign Package button located on the left-hand side of your screen. Select your role, and click 'Sign'.
    - i. The lead applicant should sign as "Principal Investigator". A designee may NOT sign for the PI. ***Applications will not be scheduled for review if required signatures are missing.***
6. Once you have attached all of your necessary documents and signed your proposal, you should be ready to submit your proposal. Click on the Submit this Package button located on the left-hand side of your screen.
- a. From the Submit Package Screen, type in the word "Ball" in the 'Search for an Organization' box and click 'Search'.
  - b. Select the **Ball State University ASPIRE Grant Program, Muncie, IN** and click continue. Please note that there are several Ball State University Committees to submit your proposal to. If you submit your proposal to the wrong committee, you will be asked to withdraw your proposal and resubmit to the proper committee.
  - c. In the Submission Type drop-down menu, select 'Funding/Grant' and click 'Submit'.

The Submission Manager screen (can be found by clicking on the Submission Manager button located on the left-hand side of your screen) will show you the list of studies to which you have access – those you have created and those which have been shared with you at any level of access. Studies which have not been submitted are labeled "Work in Progress" in the Status column. Studies which have been submitted but not reviewed are labeled "Pending Review." Clicking on the title of any proposal will take you to the Project Overview for the selected proposal.