



Office of Research

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

SPARC Graduate Research Grant

2025-2026 Terms and Conditions

Project Period

For 2025-2026 SPARC Graduate Research Grants, the project period is May 1, 2026 through July 31, 2027 (15 months) OR until graduation/degree receipt, whichever is first.

Please note the project period for this grant, especially the end date. Your advisor and department business manager will be notified at 90, 60 and 30 days before the end date. Extension requests must be made to the program manager for this grant in the Office of Research at least 30 days prior to the end of the project period (*see below*). Once the grant account is closed, it cannot be reopened and *no exceptions* will be made. Any unspent balances over \$100 will be returned to the Office of Research.

Account Setup

The following is required within one week* of award notification, the department or unit business administrator must email the following to Gina Hambrick at hambricg@mailbox.sc.edu:

- USCeRA Proposal Number
- Dept Number & operating unit number for the unit managing the award account (this may be different than the student's primary department)
- Faculty advisor name, USCID, and Network ID
- Level 1 Account Approver names, USCIDs, and Network IDs – *up to 3 approvers permitted*
- Level 2 Account Approver names, USCIDs, and Network IDs – *up to 3 approvers permitted*

*any delay in providing this information significantly impacts account setup for all awards. Expenditures are not allowed until the account is established. Be mindful that any project related to human subjects or animal care cannot begin until you have secured IRB or IACUC approvals.

****Once the account is created**, the project IDs will be available to the department business administrator through the Finance Intranet. Awardees will work directly with their department business managers or administrators for all expenditures including salary/hire paperwork.

Expenditures

You must follow established University procedures in expending the funds for your project. Pay special attention to policies and procedures relating to such items as purchasing, participant incentives, and personnel.

- To be eligible to receive SPARC funds, at the time of award (May), students must have at least one full year left in the program prior to anticipated degree completion.
- Expenditures must comply with the listing of allowable and unallowable costs described in the SPARC Application Guidelines.
- E funds are the source of funding for SPARC grants. All expenditures must be compliant with E fund procurement requirements.

- The faculty advisor/SPARC PI must authorize all expenditures.
- Financial compensation for faculty is not permitted in any form.
- Should any cost overruns occur, they will be charged to the Faculty Advisor's department.
- Changes in budget categories of more than 10% must be sent to the SPARC program administrator (*see webpage*) for approval by the VPR's office or the funds may be forfeited.
- The project period ends upon graduation or leaving the degree program.
- Unexpended SPARC funds in your account (of more than \$100) must be returned to the Office of Research at the end of the project period, when you graduate, or when you leave USC, *whichever is first*.
- Funds may only be used for the awarded student and project.
- SPARC funds may not be transferred from the SPARC account to other accounts.
- Accounting of award expenditures may be requested by the Office of Research at any point during the project period or after completion of the project.

Travel

- All domestic and international travel must comply with university policies, guidelines, and restrictions – Departmental, Controller's Office, and, if applicable, Education Abroad.
- No travel expenses are permitted for reimbursement for travel dates (*start and return dates*) that occur after the grant enddate or post-graduation, even if purchased prior to these enddates.
- Travel and all associated expenses must be approved and coordinated through the awardee's department prior to any SPARC-related travel and travel related purchases. Check with your departmental business manager or administrator for details and processes. ***Reimbursement will be denied if not approved prior to purchase.***
- Projects involving travel outside the US or to US territories, *including conference travel*, must be approved by the [Education Abroad Office](#) at least 30 days prior to departure (90 days for higher risk destinations). Students MUST comply with all requirements, terms, and conditions including insurance and pre-departure training. Should your travel be deemed unsafe for any reason at any time, the SPARC program will follow the recommendations of the Education Abroad authority and has the right to deny and/or revoke funding. [Registration process here](#).

Research Compliance

- The student and Faculty Advisor are responsible for maintaining all University, state, and federal research compliance requirements, including but not limited to human subjects, vertebrate animals, radioisotopes, and biohazardous materials.
- Projects involving the use of humans as research subjects, cannot begin until IRB approval has been obtained.
- Projects involving live, vertebrate animals, cannot begin until IACUC approval has been obtained.
- The IRB or IACUC approval (or exempt) letter must be emailed to the SPARC program administrator (*see webpage*) prior to starting the project.
- For questions, contact the [Office of Research Compliance](#) at 777-7095.

Intellectual Property

All projects are subject to USC Intellectual Property policies. For further information and questions, please contact the [Technology Commercialization Office](#).

Extension Requests

Under exceptional circumstances, a *single* no-cost extension and up to one year, may be granted.

- Requests for extensions must be made by email ***at least 30 days*** prior to the project end date to the SPARC program administrator (*see webpage*). If the request is submitted by the student, the advisor and department business manager must be copied.

- Extension requests must include the project ID#, the reason for the request/justification, and the new requested end date. Extensions are typically by semester timeframes (ex. Fall=12/31, Spring=5/31, or Summer=8/31).

Presentations and Publications

Any presentation or publication produced as a result of this award must contain an acknowledgment of support such as: "This work was partially supported by a SPARC Graduate Research Grant from the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of South Carolina."

Reporting Requirements

- SPARC recipients are required to present a poster at Discover USC. Typically this is done in the year following the grant start date, but can be done later as long the requirement is met prior to graduation. **Registration is NOT automatic** - Grant awardees MUST register to present by the deadline on the website sc.edu/DiscoverUSC
- Awardees are required to complete yearly online surveys, which will allow the Office of Research to track your progress and document publications, presentations, and/or awards for three years following the grant period.
- A final report (1 to 2 pages) must be sent to the SPARC program administrator, no later than 30 days after the grant end date of the award, or prior to graduation, *whichever is first*.

The report should include the following information:

- 1) A summary of the research or creative research project (max 2 pages), including the activities performed and major research results/outcomes (publications, awards, grants, fellowships, etc.). *This should be written in language appropriate for a general (non-expert) audience.*
- 2) A brief statement/explanation of how SPARC funding enhanced your graduate research/creative experience
- 3) A minimum of two photographs (as separate attachments – not embedded in the report), which should include a headshot of yourself and a photo of you working on your creative or research project. *Please note these pictures may be used to showcase and/or promote the SPARC Program.*