Student Opportunities for Academic Research (SOAR)
Semester Research Grant: Call for Proposals

Semester Research Grants

The goal of the Student Opportunities for Academic Research (SOAR) semester research grant is to facilitate student research in collaboration with a faculty mentor. Projects may be based on a faculty member’s existing research or newly designed by the student and faculty mentor. SOAR provides students a stipend for up to fourteen weeks of part-time work. Proposals may also include a request for project expenses. The SOAR committee invites students and faculty to submit proposals for the semester research grant.

Eligibility

At the time of the project, a student must have full-time status at the college, be of at least sophomore standing, and have completed at least one full-time semester at Moravian College. If the QPA of the student is less than 3.0, the faculty mentor should include an explanation of why the student is recommended for the program.

At the time of the project, a faculty member must be a current full-time faculty member with at least one year of teaching experience at the college, an Emeritus faculty member of the college, or a current adjunct faculty member who has taught at the college for at least two full years.

Calendar and Compensation

1. The student may work up to 8 hours per week for up to 14 weeks of the semester.

2. The student receives a stipend computed as $7.50 times the total number of hours proposed (maximum of 112 hours).

3. Faculty mentors do not receive monetary compensation.

4. As an optional add-on to the proposal, applicants may request up to $300 per student for equipment, supplies and/or travel expenses. If the project involves travel outside the continental United States, the request may be up to $600 for travel expenses.

Expectations

1. Each student meets regularly with his or her faculty mentor.

2. Students and faculty work with Public Relations to produce a profile of the student and his or her project.

3. Students participate in the Moravian College Scholar’s Day.

4. At the completion of the project, the faculty member submits a one to two page report to the SOAR director assessing the project.

5. At the completion of the project, the student submits a one to two page report to the SOAR director describing his or her accomplishments for the project.
6. For a fall-semester project, these reports are due by the first day of classes for the spring semester. For a spring-semester project, these reports are the first day of classes for the summer semester.

Application Procedures

A semester research grant application consists of the following parts:

1. A SOAR semester grant cover sheet (one per student) containing vital information about the project, student, and faculty mentor.

2. A faculty proposal for the project that explains the goals of the project and roles of the participants.

3. A student statement of purpose that describes the student’s rationale for pursuing SOAR and expected outcomes.

4. (Where Relevant) An expense proposal that enumerates and justifies material and travel expenses for the project.

Fall-semester grant applications are due on May 1 of the previous spring semester (or the following Monday if the first falls on a weekend). Applicants will receive notification of the status of their grant application by June 1 (or the following Monday if the first falls on a weekend).

Spring-semester grant applications are due on November 1 of the previous fall semester (or the following Monday if the first falls on a weekend). Applicants will receive notification of the status of their grant application by December 1 (or the following Monday if the first falls on a weekend).

The faculty proposal, student statement(s) of purpose, and expense proposal are submitted electronically to the Director of SOAR. The cover sheet is submitted in hardcopy to the Director of SOAR.

Application Part I: SOAR Cover Sheet

1. The cover sheet is available on the SOAR webpage, http://www.soar.moravian.edu/.

2. This form is signed by each student and the faculty mentor.

Application Part 2: Faculty Proposal

1. Proposal length is limited to three single-spaced pages.

2. In the heading of the proposal include:
   - The title of the project.
   - The name, rank, and department of the faculty mentor.
   - The names of all students on the project.
   - The start date of the project and length in weeks.

3. Provide a succinct and non-technical description of the project. The audience for the proposal is a committee of inter-disciplinary faculty.

4. Enumerate the roles and responsibilities of the student(s) and faculty mentor, and include a time table of expected milestones.
5. Describe how the student will be engaged in discipline-appropriate scholarly research.

6. Describe how the work of the student will contribute to the discipline and opportunities the student will have to share his or her work with other students, faculty, and the community.

Because funded proposals are posted to the SOAR webpage, please do not include student contact information or QPA in the faculty proposal.

**Application Part 3: Student Statement of Purpose**

1. Statement of purpose length is limited to two single-spaced pages.

2. In the heading of the statement include:
   - The title of the project.
   - The name, major, and expected date of graduation of the student.
   - The name of the faculty mentor.
   - Whether on-campus housing is requested during the project.

3. Provide a brief discussion of your rationale to participate in this project.

4. Describe your expected outcomes for the project.

Because funded proposals are posted to the SOAR webpage, please do not include student contact information or QPA in the student statement of purpose.

**(Optional) Application Part 4: Expense Proposal**

- Expense proposal length is limited to two single-spaced pages.

- In the heading of the proposal include:
  - The title of the project.
  - The name of the faculty mentor.
  - The names of all students on the application.

- The body of the proposal should contain an itemized list of equipment, supplies and/or travel expenses for the project. For each item, describe why it is necessary for the successful completion of the project, and if relevant, how the item supports a long-term project.

- Explain why each requested material item is not available through existing on-campus resources (e.g. CIT or Inter-library loan) or why the available item is insufficient for the project. Note that SOAR has a standing agreement with CIT to make laptops available SOAR projects.
Project Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using three criteria:

1. Benefit to the student. A successful proposal describes how the project engages the students in discipline-appropriate scholarly activity. A proposal where the students participate in multiple phases of an overall project is stronger than one where the students only see fragments of the research process.

2. Contribution to the discipline. A successful proposal describes a project where the students engage in original work and have the opportunity to share that work in a meaningful way. A proposal where the student anticipates presenting or performing his or her work to a local, regional, or national audience is stronger than one where the student has no plans for sharing the work.

3. Clarity of the proposal. A successful proposal contains faculty and student writing that clearly articulates the project and its merits to an inter-disciplinary faculty audience.

The number of students on a proposal will not directly effect whether the proposal is funded. However, proposals with multiple students should have benefits to the students and the potential for disciplinary contributions proportional to the number of students. Further, the faculty member should describe how working on a team offers benefits to the students that would not be available on a single-student project.

A student may not use the same topic on a SOAR project and an honors project simultaneously.

Expense Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Expense proposals are evaluated independently after a project is granted faculty/student funding. The committee may grant all, some or none of the requested expenses. Proposals will be evaluated based upon:

1. Necessity of the item. A successful proposal describes an expense that allows the student and faculty mentor to collaboratively accomplish otherwise unachievable project goals. A proposal where the item is required to complete the project is stronger than one where the item only facilitates the work.

2. The availability of the item from other sources. A successful proposal describes an expense that cannot feasibly be acquired elsewhere. A proposal that includes explicit discussion of relevant on-campus resources is stronger than one where this discussion is absent.