



## Lakers Venture Grant Program REFERENCE ONLY: APPLY ONLINE

### GUIDELINES FOR ALL GRANT PROPOSALS

A good proposal describes (1) **what you hope to accomplish**, (2) **why those objectives are important**, and (3) **how you intend to achieve them**. Your original project proposal is the core of your grant application. All good proposals will address the following questions concisely, in a manner clear to **both specialists and non-specialists**.

*Goals and Objectives:* What precisely are you hoping to accomplish?

*Literature Review/Critical Dialogue:* What kinds of previous work do you use to justify your goals and objectives? How will your proposed work build on or depart from other works? Demonstrate your knowledge of what's already been done on the subject, and what new contribution this project will make to the field.

*Project Plan:* How will you accomplish these goals? How does your project design lead to the outcomes you envision (logically and logistically)? Will experts in your discipline agree that your plan is a good one? What final product(s) will result from your project?

*Preparation:* What specific steps have you taken to prepare for this project? Where did you get the skills you will need (e.g., coursework)? What other project requirements have you completed (e.g., human subjects' approval, travel and safety plans)? If you were previously awarded a VPUE grant, include a reflection on your prior project experience.

*Resources:* How will you draw on your mentors' expertise? Do you have letters of support from contacts (at field sites or other institutions) who will be critical to your project's success? Are you seeking or do you have any other sources of funding? What additional sources of information, supplies, or equipment will you rely on from campus?

*Budget:* Reflecting on the resources you need to execute your proposed project, how much money do you need, and what will it be used for?

*Dissemination Plan:* How will you share the results of your project? At what conference or poster session or seminar or artists' gallery show? How will you inform others about what you've learned, discovered or created?!

### Additional Proposal Guidelines | RESEARCH

*(with thanks to the Stanford and Notre Dame Undergraduate Research Grant Program)*

#### Humanities Research Projects

*Goals and Objectives:* State your general scholarly questions. You may frame exploratory research with open-ended questions, or make specific assertions that you intend to support through your methodology.

*Literature Review:* Discuss your project's relationship to current thinking in your field. Select and critique relevant works that situate your planned scholarship, and demonstrate your knowledge of



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what has been done on this topic or in related areas. Show how your project will contribute to existing schools of thought.

*Project Plan:* Provide a detailed methodology that will enable you to achieve your project goals. What texts, observations, or other source materials will you need to answer your question? What analytical framework will you use to understand or interpret these sources? Provide a logistical plan, including your timeline and milestones for progress.

### Science or Engineering Research Projects

*Goals and Objectives:* State hypotheses or theoretical predictions that you will test. If your project is part of a larger collaborative research agenda within your mentor's lab or group, describe both the overarching research goal and the particular component(s) that you are focusing on. What are your specific aims for this particular phase of the project?

*Literature Review:* Critique the most relevant peer-reviewed papers that set the stage for your hypotheses. Are you challenging or refining current knowledge of the mechanisms, technologies, or phenomena of interest? Demonstrate your grasp of what has been done on this topic or in related areas, and show how your research builds on and contributes to this body of knowledge. Include works from a variety of research groups. Include works from a variety of research groups.

*Project Plan:* What are the key steps in the experiment or modeling effort that will test your hypothesis? What quantitative analyses will enable you to interpret your observations or refine your model? Spell out your specific role and responsibilities, and your intellectual ownership of these responsibilities. Provide a logistical plan, including your timeline and milestones for progress. If your project involves animal subjects, submit an Animal Subjects Research Appendix.

### Social Science Research Projects

*Goals and Objectives:* State the questions or hypotheses you will examine, making clear the scope of focus and the quantitative or qualitative nature of your goals.

*Literature Review:* Discuss how your research questions connect to current thinking in your field. Select and critique recent works that provide a foundation to the way you are stating your research questions, and show how your project will contribute to existing schools of thought.

*Project Plan:* Provide a detailed methodology that will enable you to achieve your project goals. What observations, datasets, or surveys/interviews will you need to answer your question? What analytical framework (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods as appropriate) will let you draw sound conclusions? Provide a logistical plan, including your timeline and milestones for progress. If your project involves human subjects, state when you submitted your Human Subjects Protocol to GVSU IRB. *If relevant, include a draft of your survey instrument or interview guide as an appendix to your proposal.*

### Additional Proposal Guidelines | ARTS/DESIGN

*Goals and Objectives:* What are the objectives of your project? Give your most focused vision for the finished project or production. Describe any key expressions, impressions, or insights that you intend, and the audience that you intend them for.



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**Critical Dialogue:** Discuss sources of artistic/design inspiration for the project. What is the relationship between your proposed project and past or current work by other artists/designers? In light of the current dialogue across related media, how is your vision unique, interesting, or original? Make a case that there is a community of artists and critics that will be interested in your work.

**Project Plan:** What techniques will you use? Why and how will you use them? What area/media will you be working in? What is your conceptual approach to this project? What concerns do you address? How do you envision your final product? For productions or exhibitions, provide a detailed timeline with the projected start date, including: pre-production research; production schedule, allocating time & delegation for tasks; post-production plans, if applicable. How will the final work/production you envision enhance your interests, skills, opportunities for further work? How will your plans for presenting this work affect your audience?

**Preparation and Mentoring:** What formal or informal training and mentoring have you had, or will you need? How do your past experiences inform this project? Link to online samples of your previous work if possible. Why are your mentors and their expertise a good fit for this project? Creative arts projects should draw on multiple mentors as necessary, i.e., one mentor specializing in the medium and another specializing in the topical area.

### TURNING YOUR GOOD PROPOSAL INTO A GREAT ONE

Paying attention to these details can improve your chances of getting funded.

- **Focus and scale of the project objectives:** Open your proposal with a crystal clear 1-2 sentence statement of your objective. This helps reviewers orient themselves, and prepares them to read the rest of your proposal more effectively. By carefully articulating specific, well-honed goals, you reassure reviewers that your project is executable, and that your final product will exhibit real depth and sophistication.
- **A robust discussion of existing works in the field:** The single most common deficiency in student proposals is inadequate rationale for doing the project at hand. A critique of published scholarship or of recent creative work does not mean a list or a cursory description. Rather, we expect you to select from a broad range of scholarly/creative influences with which you are familiar, and critically analyze these key works to show how these have shaped your proposed project and how you will contribute to these developments in your discipline.
- **Significance of research projects:** Students sometimes focus on why their project is important to them personally. In a research proposal, we seek to understand the project's intellectual significance to scholars in your discipline. We are not asking about its importance to your educational development or importance to a humanitarian or ideological cause per se, while you may include this discussion. Demonstrating the scholarly significance of your project is best done through a robust literature review. There is always peer-reviewed literature that discusses some of the theoretical or methodological background to your research question.
- **Balance of independence and collaboration:** Write your project plan in the first person. Reviewers want to see what you will take responsibility for, and what you will be doing with the assistance of others. If you write that "... the data will be gathered and analyzed using a statistical model", you are providing much less information than if you had written "... I will gather the data and analyze them using a statistical model devised by a graduate student in our research group".



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- **Preparation:** Give a concise outline of specific courses and other experiences that directly shaped your approach to your topic, and are foundational to your project's success; or state when you will complete such courses before the start of your project. If your project involves human subjects, state when you submitted your Human Subjects Protocol to Stanford IRB.
- **Mentoring:** Provide an account of the interaction between you and your mentor(s) to date, and your plan for continued interaction. Describe how your mentor's area of expertise will support your work. Your proposal and the mentor's letter of recommendation should make clear the balance between independence and assistance you can expect from your mentor.