

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Bridge Funding Request Policy

PURPOSE

The bridge funding mechanism is designed to temporarily support the research programs of Ob-Gyn Faculty who have shown high productivity in research but are experiencing a gap in their research funding from extramural and non-Ob-Gyn intramural grants. It is expected that the faculty member requesting the bridging funds from the Department will use them to support the salaries and stipends of research personnel and trainees and for the purchase of supplies and instrumentation necessary to maintain a competitive research program. The purpose of the bridge funding mechanism is to ensure the best interest of the department in protecting and fostering the research careers of productive scholars from factors that may lead to early termination of productivity. Faculty receiving the bridging funds are expected to use the resources to develop and submit competitive extramural and non-Ob-Gyn intramural grants. The following criteria and policies will be used to evaluate requests for the bridging funds.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Applicants must have a minimum 50% appointment as faculty in the Department of Ob-Gyn.
2. Applicants who have submitted renewal or new extramural or non-Ob-Gyn intramural (typically, non-pilot awards from the Wisconsin Partnership Program, Research Forward, etc.) applications that can sustain their program within the past year will be considered as strong candidates for the bridging funds.
3. Priority will be given to requests that align with the programmatic needs of the Department of Ob-Gyn.
4. Faculty may submit only one application for bridging funds per fiscal year, and no more than one bridge request will be awarded to a given faculty over a three-year period of time.
5. It is expected that investigators applying for bridging funds will have applied to all other reasonable opportunities before pursuing this mechanism and will have used all available funds (start-up, CapEx, gift, residual) before bridging funds are awarded.
6. The bridging funds are typically for requests that are above \$35,000. For requests up to \$35,000, faculty should apply for intramural R&D grants through the Research Administration Committee (RAC).
7. Faculty requesting bridging funds should have submitted large grant applications (>\$150,000 direct costs) to federal agencies (NIH, DOD, VA MERIT, etc.), foundations and intramural opportunities (Wisconsin Partnership Program, research Forward, etc.) in the past year but have received a non-fundable score. Faculty making the bridging funds request should specify how they will use the funds to successfully address the critique of these larger extramural and intramural grants.

BUDGET REQUESTS AND ALLOWABLE COSTS

1. Requests can be made for up to 12-months of funding, with a \$100,000 maximum amount requested.
2. Given the purpose of bridge funding, reasonable costs include technical research assistance (graduate student stipend, post-docs, etc.), supplies, and animal costs. The budget should reflect the real operational needs of the research program/laboratory to remain functional at a reduced level of activity until the gap in funding is corrected. Faculty salary is not allowable, and travel to scientific meetings or conferences is excluded.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Principal Investigators anticipating a potential lapse in funding are expected to apply for bridge funding a minimum of six months prior to the exhaustion of existing funds (i.e., this mechanism is not meant to acquire funds to cover an existing deficit).
2. In order to be considered for funding, investigators must provide the following to the Chair's office with their application: plan to reduce lab expenditures by 10%; applications for supplemental funding opportunities from all possible intramural and extramural sources.

3. The packet for bridge funding must include:
 - a. Completed RAC application (see attached)
 - b. PI's CV or NIH biosketch (preferred)
 - c. A complete history of grant funding and pending applications
 - d. Evidence of an aggressive pursuit of funding over the past year with at least one major funding application pending, proposal that was submitted for bridging (i.e., R01, DoD, VA Merit), date of submission, score of application and plans for resubmission. This should include the external review/summary statement of the project and, when available, its rebuttal by the investigator.
 - e. Submission of the actual grant submitted that PI would bridge to (i.e., R01, DoD, VA Merit) will be allowed; submitters will not need to pare down the grant into RAC application template.
 - f. a two-page statement from the PI which includes a plan for achieving successful funding for the specific project for which bridge funding is requested
 - g. a budget
 - h. a summary of other funds that are available and that have or will be used to assist in the bridging process.
 - i. Please submit all documents in one single PDF file as an email attachment to: zorbas@wisc.edu.
 - j. Approved applications will require progress reports at six month intervals until the time that the bridging funds are fully used.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. The Vice Chairs of Research will review the application for scientific merit and budget. At their discretion, additional reviewers may be requested to evaluate the scientific merit of the requests for bridging funds.
2. The Vice Chairs for Research will present their findings to the departmental Chair who will decide on the request based on Department priorities and finances.
3. Factors that will be considered in funding decisions will include past funding record, status of current and pending applications, publication record, current lab expenditures, programmatic priorities and financial considerations.
4. The total resources available to the investigator and length of prior funding for the project under consideration will also be taken into consideration.
5. The associated grant submissions must have been reviewed and received a critique that is addressable through the research plan outlined by the investigator in the bridging fund request.
6. Awards will depend on the availability of funds and will be made at the discretion of the Department Chair.
7. It is preferred that investigators applying for bridge funding will have funded some portion of their UW base salary with extramural funding within Ob-Gyn, which is consistent with the expectation of the Department.
8. Preference will be given to those who have not applied for a bridge funding request within three years.