

2025-26

UDRF-SI

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
RESEARCH FOUNDATION-
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

UPDATED: September 2025

UDRF-SI (2024-2025)

DEADLINES: LETTER OR INTENT: October 14, 2025; FULL PROPOSAL: November 7, 2025

Applicants do not need to generate a PeopleSoft proposal at the time of proposal submission. If the proposal is selected for funding, detailed instructions for PeopleSoft submission are included in the Appendix.

ABOUT UDRF-SI

The University of Delaware Research Foundation, Inc. (UDRF) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization supporting fundamental research in all fields of science. Although an independent corporation, it is chartered primarily to support the University's research mission. In 1994, the UDRF Board of Trustees redefined its mission to focus on providing research grants to early-career permanent faculty within science and engineering disciplines.

Established in 2008, the University of Delaware Research Foundation Strategic Initiatives (UDRF-SI) program supports innovative, high-impact scientific research proposals that are likely to elevate the research prominence and the competitiveness of UD's faculty researchers.

ELIGIBILITY FOR UDRF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (UDRF-SI) GRANTS

UDRF-SI grants have traditionally been primarily in the fields of engineering and the natural and physical sciences. However, any proposals using scientific methods geared towards improving the PI's research competitiveness for future external funding is eligible. Teams must include **only one untenured, tenure-track faculty Principal Investigator (PI)** and **at least one tenured faculty co-PI**.

Continuing Track and Research Track faculty are not eligible to be PI or lead Co-PI but may be a second Co-PI. Postdoctoral Research Scientists and Primarily Staff appointments are not eligible to participate as PI or Co-PI. All PIs and Co-PIs must be UD employees. New faculty hires are ineligible to apply to the UDRF-SI competition as PI or Co-PI if their work start date is after the submission deadline.

Previous UDRF-SI grant PI recipients are ineligible. Collaborating tenured faculty who have received UDRF and/or UDRF-SI funding in the past are eligible to again participate as Co-PI. Faculty may apply to both the UDRF and UDRF-SI programs in a calendar year. However, only one award may be received per calendar year.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Furthering the professional development of the recipients and advancing the University's research prominence are the UDRF-SI's primary objectives. Selection for funding will be based on:

1. Intellectual Merit (40%): Does the proposed work significantly advance domain knowledge, address one of the University's strategic pillars, and enhance the PI's research competitiveness?
2. Collaboration (20%): Does the collaboration press the PIs into a novel research area requiring the expertise of both collaborators?
3. Mentoring Plan (10%): Does the proposal include a substantive plan for mentoring the untenured PI?
4. Feasibility (10%): Likelihood of completion within one to two years.
5. Likelihood of Future External Funding (20%): Does the proposal articulate clear achievable goals which will likely attract new external funding?

AWARD SELECTION

University of Delaware Research Foundation grants are awarded based on eligibility and merit and administered by the UD Research Office. UDRF-SI proposals are first evaluated by UD faculty experts, and then by an administrative panel responsible for advancing research both within and across

colleges. The UDRF Board of Trustees makes the final award decisions based on the input of this two-tiered review process.

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

PROJECT BUDGET

UDRF-SI proposals may request up to \$55,000 of which **\$35,000** is sponsor direct funding with an additional **\$10,000** in match funds from the PI's Dean and **\$10,000** from the Provost's Office. **All UDRF-SI proposals require matching funds from the PI's College and Provost's Office.**

BUDGETING GUIDELINES

- **Personnel:** Graduate research assistant (RA) stipends, hourly wage, and other positions providing technical assistance are allowable (not PI or Co-PIs).
- **Fringe Benefits:** Fringe benefit costs are required for all personnel categories budgeted.
- **Direct Research Expenses:** Equipment, travel, participant support costs, and supplies and other direct research costs typically allowed by federal sponsors are allowed.
- **Unallowable Budget Categories:** Facilities and administrative (F&A) costs, graduate tuition, and faculty salary are not allowed.

All budgets should be prepared with the understanding that budget changes exceeding 25% of the total award and re-budgeting of funds into categories not in the original budget are subject to prior approval by the Research Office. See the UDRF-SI Post-Award section below for more information.

PROPOSAL DURATION

UDRF Strategic Initiatives grants are awarded for up to two years with periods of performance commencing from the project start date. No-Cost Extensions may be granted up to three times only when circumstances warrant. Instructions can be found in the UDRF-SI Post-Award section.

PROPOSAL COMPONENTS & FORMATTING

Submit the UDRF-SI proposal using the [UDRF-SI Proposal Template](#). All components should be single-spaced using 11-pt Arial font with one-inch margins. Additional information such as References, Budget Justifications, CVs, and Current & Pending Support should be combined with the proposal template and submitted as a single PDF document. Incomplete applications will be returned without review.

Executive Summary: A one-page section consisting of three sub-sections:

- **Overview:** The Overview should include a description of the scientific scope of the proposal and potential future sources of external funding.
- A statement of **Intellectual Merit:** This section should describe how the project will advance knowledge and understanding in the domain.
- A statement of **Broader Impacts:** This section should describe how the project will benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.

Project Description: A three-page section providing a statement of work including clear, achievable goals within the proposed timeline and expected significance of the proposed research. The entire Project Description should be clear to a reviewer with a technical/scientific background, but who may not be an expert in the field. The project's intellectual merit and broader impacts should be fully described in the Project Description (although they do not need to be in separate labeled sections). Additionally:

- PIs must include a timeline for the project and should include any relevant figures or tables.
- Investigators should specifically address approaches for seeking external funding.
- The Project Description must include a brief description of a Mentoring Plan for mentoring of the untenured, tenure-track PI by the tenured faculty Co-PI.

PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

1. A **letter of intent** (LOI) to submit a full proposal **must** be submitted by the deadline noted above using an [online application](#). Letters of intent include:
 - the full names, departmental affiliation, and e-mail addresses of the PI and Co-PI(s);
 - a proposed title; and,
 - a short (<250 word) abstract of the proposed work.

Only proposals submitting an LOI will be considered for the competition.

2. Lead PIs submitting an LOI will receive subsequent instructions on submission of a full proposal.
3. The [UDRF-SI Proposal Template](#) must be used for formatting the proposal which is submitted as a single PDF document. Proposals must include:
 - Title
 - Executive Summary (1 page maximum)
 - Project Description (3 pages, maximum)
 - References
 - Budget
 - Budget Justification (1 page maximum)
 - Three-page biosketches for each PI and Co-PI (NSF -style preferred); and
 - Current & Pending Support (C&P) for each PI and Co-PI (departmental start-up funds are excluded from the C&P).
4. Applications must be submitted in the online application portal by 11:59 PM on the submission deadlines noted above.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE RESEARCH FOUNDATION STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (UDRF-SI) GRANTS

UDRF-SI grants are made with the following understood commitments from the PI.

1. Acceptance signifies intent to continue employment at the University for the duration of the proposal period.
2. The University's patent, copyright, and publication policies, which can be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#), apply to research conducted under a UDRF-SI grant. UDRF-SI research must comply with the [University Research, Sponsored Programs, Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property Policies](#).
3. If the proposed research includes human subjects or private identifiable data, and/or the use of non-human vertebrate animals, the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the [Institutional Review Board](#) or the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) respectively prior to the expenditures of any UDRF-SI funds.
4. The University exercises no direction or supervision over the details of the research or activities to be performed, but it does require adherence to the original objectives and purposes of the grant. It also requires that a report on the proposal be submitted to the Research Office no later than ninety (90) days after the end date of the grant using the [UD Internal Seed Grant Final Report form](#).
5. Unless arrangements to the contrary have been included in the proposal as accepted, financial income derived from the project will be returned to the University, up to the amount of the award. This is not meant to conflict with University policies on patents, copyrights, and publications.

6. Every publication directly resulting from a research grant must include an acknowledgment that the research was carried out with the support of the University of Delaware Research Foundation. Each grantee is required to furnish one copy of any resulting papers, books, or other publications to the University Library through the Research Office (researchdev@udel.edu).

UDRF-SI POST AWARD

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Awarded grants will be assigned an award and purpose code for proposal expenditures. Successful awards must be entered into PeopleSoft by the PI's departmental administrator for tracking and reporting purposes. Future correspondence and post-award reporting should include **the award number and purpose code**. All proposals funded at a level different than proposed must provide a revised budget before the purpose code may be established.

RE-BUDGETING

Budget changes exceeding 25% of the total award and re-budgeting of funds into categories not in the original budget (e.g., equipment, foreign travel) are subject to prior approval by the Research Office. Requests for re-budgeting must be submitted on the [UD Internal Seed Grant Request form](#).

NO- COST EXTENSION REQUESTS

Requests for no-cost extensions must be submitted to the Research Office using the [UD Internal Seed Grant Request form](#) no sooner than 90 days and at least 30 days prior to the award end date. Requests should include the reason for and the duration of the extension. NCE requests are limited to three per award.

FINAL REPORT

A final report for the award must be submitted to the Research Office using the Seed Grant Final Report Form no later than ninety (90) days after the end date of the grant. [The Seed Grant Final Report Form may be found here.](#)

APPENDIX

PROCEDURES FOR SELECTED PROPOSALS

FACULTY PROCEDURES

1. When a proposal is selected for funding, the faculty member should reach out to their applicable department administrator so that a record in UD's Grant Management System, PeopleSoft (PS), can be initiated.
2. Faculty should provide their department administrator with a single PDF copy of the full proposal submission.
3. Faculty should work with the department administrator to develop a more detailed budget as is required for PeopleSoft input. A [detailed budget template](#) can be found on the Research Office website.

DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATOR PROCEDURES

Department administrator guidance for using [UD's Grants Management System](#) is available on the Research Office website and by contacting the applicable department's assigned Contract & Grant Specialist in the Research Office.

UDRF-SI PEOPLESOFT PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sponsor ID: 2910 - University of Delaware Research Foundation
2. Purpose: RSCH4- Foundation Research
3. Budget Considerations:
 - Up to \$35,000 (from UDRF) entered as direct costs. (Purpose Code Fund Type 45)
 - \$10,000 (from the Provost Office/Research Office) entered as cost share from department ID #01551. (There is no need for the Provost's Office to approve the Proposal Summary Form).
 - \$10,000 (from College Dean) entered as cost share from the appropriate department ID.
 - Faculty salary is not allowable. 1% effort is not required as cost share for PIs.
 - Faculty mentor (tenured faculty) should be entered as co-PI with 0% effort.
 - Graduate student stipend or hourly wage is allowable; however, graduate student tuition is prohibited.
 - Include fringe benefit expenses when applicable.
 - F&A Pricing Setup: F&A costs are not permissible on UDRF awards.
 - Choose "Industrial Research On-Campus" for the rate type; overwrite the F&A rate to zero.
 - Pricing Method should be FIXED
4. Under the Attachments tab, upload a single PDF copy of the full proposal submission using the following naming convention: ProposalID_Other
5. Routing of [FIN Proposal Approval Summary \(PAS\) webform](#) should include PI, Department Chair, College Dean and OSP per standard procedures.