MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY | Office of Research

FY26 Student-Led Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities (RSCA) Program Announcement and Guidelines

1. Overview

This **1-year** award supports student-led research, scholarship, and creative activities by undergraduate (up to $2,000) and graduate students (up to $5,000) under the guidance of a faculty mentor. This may include theses, dissertations, culminating applied projects and capstone projects. This program does **not** support coursework activities, projects and/or expenses that will produce items for sale and/or personal profit, or administrative tasks related to capstone/thesis/dissertation preparation (word processing, indexing, publication fees, etc.). Applications are accepted from individuals only.

Proposals will be reviewed by the SL-RSCA Proposal Review Committee, composed of graduate students from across the University who will evaluate proposals based on the criteria defined in this announcement, and make funding recommendations to the Vice Provost for Research.

Students: please discuss your project goals, project plan, and budget with your faculty mentor throughout the proposal preparation process to ensure that your mentor is informed and prepared to support you in this work.

NOTE: Bloomfield campus students must [activate and "claim" your Montclair NETID](#) and use your Montclair NETID to login to InfoReady. Similarly, Bloomfield campus mentors must use your Montclair NETID for this system.

2. Timeline

- **6/5/25**– Due date for students to submit the Project Narrative and Supporting Materials (see Sections I – II below). Applications are due by 5:30pm via [InfoReady](#), at which time faculty mentors will have access to all application materials and be able to upload their required components
    > IMPORTANT NOTE: Applicants **should share proposal drafts** with the faculty mentor during the preparation process, **prior to June 5**, so that the mentor can prepare their appraisal.
- **6/12/25**– Due date for faculty mentors to submit their appraisal and CV (see Section III below). These items must be submitted via [InfoReady](#) by 5:30pm.
- If awarded, the project period will be **9/1/25 - 6/30/26.**

3. Student Applicant Eligibility Requirements
- Undergraduate student applicants must have successfully completed at least 60 credits of degree program coursework at the time of application.
- Graduate student applicants must have successfully completed at least 9 credits of degree program coursework at the time of application.
- The applicant must be in academic good standing (cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher for undergraduate students; cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher for graduate students) at the time of application.
- Applications are prepared and submitted by the student. The student applicant must be intellectually involved in the project design, application preparation, execution of the project, and dissemination of the results.
- Awardees must be enrolled in program coursework at the time the award is made, and remain enrolled for the duration of the award.
- Students who received a FY25 SL-RSCA grant are eligible to apply in FY26, but their FY26 application must clearly explain how the proposed project differs from the previously-funded project. The program will not make new awards to continue FY25 projects.

4. Faculty Mentor Eligibility Requirements
- Mentors must be full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members.

5. Allowable Costs
Allowable costs generally include spend categories used for external awards, including but not limited to student hourly salary (up to $2,000 maximum for salary for the project period); the student's project-related travel expenses for data gathering activities; materials and supplies; human subjects incentives; and/or project-related services and fees such as consulting, computing services, laboratory user fees, transcription, etc. A maximum of $1,000 is allowed for conference travel, to take place during the project period, to present the results of this SL-RSCA project at a professional conference.

NOTE:
- Hourly worker salary is subject to Human Resource's [Compensation Guidelines.](#)
- Graduate students who are supported as graduate assistants or doctoral assistants are subject to University rules concerning additional salary earned during the GA/DA contract period.

6. Prohibited Expenses
Prohibited expenses include but are not limited to computers, laptops, tablets, capital equipment, catering, salary or stipends for Montclair employees, mentor travel expenses, honoraria, tuition, subawards, and any cost listed as unallowable in the Office of Sponsored Programs' [Sponsored Programs Handbook.](#)

7. Application Format
- Items A-I listed below (Project Narrative, References, and Student's Curriculum Vitae (CV), and Budget) must be assembled into **<u>one</u> single PDF file**.
- Items A-F comprise the Project Narrative, which is limited to **5 pages maximum**.
- Item G, References Citied, is limited to **1 page maximum**.
- Item H, the Student's CV, is limited to **2 pages maximum**. Applicants **<u>must</u>** use the template provided.
- Item I, the Budget Table and Budget narrative. Applicants **<u>must</u>** use the table and template provided.
- Use **1-inch page margins** for all components.
- Use **12-point font** for all components.
  <u>Applications that fail to follow these instructions will be returned without review</u>.

8. Application Components

I. **Cover Sheet** - to be completed within InfoReady (All fields are REQUIRED)
The cover sheet includes:
- High-level details about the applicant and proposal.
- A 250-word **abstract** containing a high-level summary of the project goals, significance, and anticipated outcomes and impacts. We recommend writing the abstract, and the proposal, so that a broad audience and non-specialists will understand the project goals and significance.

II. **Project Narrative and Supporting Materials**
   A. Specific Aims
   Provide a high-level overview of the goals and objectives to be addressed by the proposed project. Explain WHAT you intend to accomplish and WHY it is important. WHY does this project need to be done?

   B. Background and Significance
   Explain how this project builds upon previous work in order to advance your discipline, i.e., what has been done before and what additions or improvements will result from your work? For example, is your project addressing a knowledge gap in the discipline? Are you addressing an unanswered problem or challenge in your discipline? What new data, knowledge, and or creative content will this project add to your discipline, and why is it important to do so? Applicants are strongly encouraged to write the background and significance in plain language such that it is understandable to a non-specialist.

   C. Project Plan
   - Describe HOW the project will be conducted. This may include:
     - Describing your study areas/field sites and why they were chosen
     - Explaining your data collection and data analysis methods and procedures, for example use of research instrumentation, computer modeling, image

processing, conducting interviews, administering surveys, leading focus groups, analyzing case studies, conducting data mining from a library, collection, internet sites, or database, conducting statistical analysis, leading rehearsals, preparing an exhibition, etc.
- o Creative process to be implemented
- o Explain how methods and tools utilized and the information generated will be applied to accomplish the specific aims.
- o Project Timeline: How much time is required to complete the project components? By what stage in the project (for example, 1st month? 1st quarter? 1st half? etc.) do you anticipate competing each major project component?

D. **Preliminary results**
If available, the inclusion of preliminary results is encouraged to demonstrate project feasibility and the current status of the project.

E. **Anticipated outcomes and impacts**
Describe the anticipated outcomes and the impact of the proposed work on your discipline if the project is successful, and the impacts of the project more broadly for the applicant and the broader community.

F. **Plan for dissemination of project results**
Describe the anticipated plans to present the project results in an appropriate venue, for example at a professional conference, via publication, via a performance or exhibition, etc.

G. **References Cited (1-page max, separate from Project Narrative 5-page limit)**

H. **Student's Curriculum Vitae (CV) using the template provided (2-page limit)**

I. **Budget Table and Narrative (Use the template provided)**
Applicants are required to use the budget template provided. Applicants should provide clear and concise explanations for the amount and the proposed use of funds requested in each budget category, and how the expenditure supports the specific aims.

III. **Faculty Mentor Application Components** – After the student applicant submits their proposal in the InfoReady system, the proposal will then route to the faculty mentor to complete these required components in InfoReady. Failure to submit these components will render the application incomplete and returned without review.

A. **Faculty Mentor Appraisal:**
- The mentor's name and role at the University
- How long have you worked with the applicant and in what capacities?

- An assessment of the student's preparation and ability to implement the proposed project.
- A description of the student's intellectual contributions to the proposed project, both current and anticipated, for example project conceptualization, project design, project plan, etc.
- The mentor's plan to oversee and support this project and contribute to student's success.
- Describe any other current or pending sources of support available for this project (for example external grants, start-up funds, IDC, department or College/School support, etc.).

Faculty mentors are reminded that the proposal review committee will be comprised of advanced graduate students from across the University.

B. **Faculty Mentor CV (2-limit using the template provided).** Applications will be returned without review if CVs are non-compliant.

C. **Faculty Mentor Certification**
In addition, faculty mentors will be required to agree to the following attestations within the InfoReady system:
1. *I have read and I support the student's proposal and budget. I agree to serve as the project mentor according to the mentoring plan provided, and serve as liaison for internal university financial processes (such as verifying worked hours for hourly compensation, assisting the student with obtaining quotes and verifying receipt of goods and services, etc.). As mentor, I will ensure that the project is conducted responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with all applicable University and external guidelines and policies, and ensure submission of the project final report to the Office of Sponsored Programs.*
2. *I certify that the student is in academic good standing and has completed the required number of coursework credits (at least 60 credits for an undergraduate student, or 9 credits for a graduate student) as of today's date.*
3. *I certify that the student has been intellectually involved in the project design and application preparation. If selected for funding, the student will lead the project implementation and be involved in the dissemination of the results.*

9. Evaluation Criteria
A. Project significance and potential impacts
- Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the discipline?
- Does the proposal explain how this project makes new and original contributions to the discipline?

B. Project Design
- What are the project's strengths and weaknesses?

- Are the project strategy and methods appropriate to accomplish the specific aims and project goals?
- Does the proposal explain how the data to be collected/information generated/activities to be conducted will be applied to accomplish the specific aims and project goals?
- Is the project timeline reasonable and realistic for completing the activities described?

C. Project Outcomes
- Does the proposal explain the anticipated outcomes and the impact of the proposed work?
- Does the proposal include a plan to communicate/share project results in an appropriate venue?

D. Applicant's preparation to conduct the project
- Does the proposal convey that the applicant is well prepared to conduct the proposed work?
- Has the faculty mentor presented a thoughtful plan to support and contribute to student's success?

E. Project Budget
- Is the budget reasonable and appropriate for the proposed activities?
- Does the budget demonstrate an optimal use of the requested funds?

As part of the Office of Research's commitment to promote research, scholarship, and creative activities throughout the University, the Student RSCA Proposal Review Committee and Vice Provost for Research may also consider the distribution of awards amongst University Colleges and Schools, and how the funding recommendations promote equity and inclusion.

10. Award Requirements
- Projects selected for funding will be reviewed by the Office of Research Compliance and Regulatory Programs prior to finalizing the award to ensure compliance with all compliance committees and export control regulations.
- The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) serves as the cost center manager for funded awards and will review and approve all financial transactions and requests for budget modifications.
- Funded student-mentor teams agree to:
  1. Abide by all program guidelines and requirements;
  2. Submit a final report of project activities within 30 days of the grant end date.
- Unused balances are NOT transferrable to other students or to the faculty member.

Award recipients and mentors who fail to meet the requirements of this internal grant are ineligible to apply for new Office of Research grants until all requirements are fulfilled.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY | Office of Research

FY26 Student-Led Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities (RSCA)

Required Budget Template

	Applicant's Request
Monetary Expenditure Request	
Student salary: # of hr per week x $ rate per hr x # of weeks (note: use HR salary guide to determine hourly wage)	$
Travel for data collection: airfare/train, lodging, per diem, mileage, etc.	$
Conference travel, if applicable: registration, airfare/train, lodging, per diem mileage, etc.	$
Materials/Supplies	$
Services/Fees	$
Consultants	$
Other Costs: please itemize	$
Total (maximum amount that can be requested is $2,000 for an undergraduate student project or $5,000 for a graduate student project)	$

Budget Narrative

Use the space below (and the next page if needed) to provide a description of each of the costs listed above. **The budget table and narrative are limited to 2 pages.**

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE FOR STUDENT APPLICANTS AND FACULTY MENTORS

All student applicants and faculty mentors must use the enclosed CV template.

INSTRUCTIONS are in italics. The Template begins on page 11.

All CV's are limited to 2 pages.

Non-compliant CVs will render the application incomplete and returned without review.

STUDENTS: Discuss these instructions with your faculty mentor and send them rough drafts for their review and comments.

CV HEADER INFORMATION
REQUIRED for both students and faculty. The header should include your full name, your ORCID ID if you have one (strongly recommended, this is your unique research identifier), your current position title, physical address, and contact information.

EDUCATION
REQUIRED for students and faculty. This section contains your educational experiences, with the most recent experience listed first. Each entry contains the organization that conferred the degree, the degree type and level (PhD, MA, MS, MBA, MFA, MPH, BA, BS, etc.), year the degree was earned, and the discipline in which the degree was earned.

Examples

Montclair State University	*Clinical Psychology*	*PhD*	*Anticipated May 2027*
Rutgers University	*Psychology*	*MA*	*2021*
The College of New Jersey	*Sociology (cum laude)*	*BA*	*2017*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
REQUIRED for students and faculty. Use this section to list your professional experiences with the most recent experience listed first. Students, include your experience as a doctoral assistant, graduate assistant, teaching assistant, hourly employee as a student researcher, internship and externship experiences, field experiences, and external professional employment or volunteer experiences that demonstrate your preparation and readiness to complete the work described in your RSCA proposal.

Examples
2022-present   Doctoral Research Assistant, Environmental Science and Management Program,

*lab-based research on Pleistocene warm pulses and superinterglacials as
recorded in Antarctic marine sediment*

*2021-2022   Teaching Assistant, Department of Biology, led laboratory sections and field trips
for Principles of Biology II ad Ecology*

RESEARCH PRODUCTS

*REQUIRED for students and faculty. Use this section to list your scholarly products such as
peer-reviewed publications, conference presentations (this includes Montclair's Student
Research Symposium), data reports, software/code developed, exhibitions, juried presentations,
videos, films, etc.*

*Use a separate subheading for each category of product, for example peer-reviewed
publications, abstracts and conference presentations, etc. Do not mix them together. This is to
accurately convey the nature of the product to the reader.*

*IMPORTANT: Give **the <u>full bibliographic citation</u>** for each product, as you will in the reference
section of your thesis/dissertation. This properly credits everyone involved in creating the
product and accurately represents the venue in which the product appeared.*

*The Office of Research highly values student involvement in research, including dissemination of
results. Indicate Montclair student authors and coauthors with * in the citation, and other
student authors (for example students at collaborating institutions) with §.*

EXTERNAL GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

*REQUIRED for faculty mentors. Optional for students, if applicable. Use this section to list
recent external grants. For students this may include internal research support from your
College/School travel grants or grants in aid of research from a professional organization.*

For faculty this includes all external sponsors.

*Give the <u>full citation</u> for the grant to properly credit the personnel involved in the grant proposal
and project implementation, accurately represent your role, and accurately represent the dollar
amount that Montclair received. Grant citations should include the grant title, PI, co-PIs,
Sponsor, amount awarded to your institution, and the project period.*

Examples:

*Planning: Advancing AI Implementation at Emerging Research Institutions, R Ruediger (PI,
Ithaka S+R), S. Brachfeld (co-PI at Montclair State University), and Douglas Dechow (co-
PI at Chapman University), NSF GRANTED program, $19,311 (Montclair budget),
12/15/2024 to 03/31/2026.*

Collaborative Research: Project Title, J. Doe (Other University, lead PI), M. Smith, B. (Montclair PI), $200,000 (Montclair budget), Sponsor Name, 07/01/2023 to 06/20/2025.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

REQUIRED for students and faculty. Use this section to list activities that demonstrate your involvement in your professional community at Montclair and externally. Examples include, but are not limited to, serving as a peer mentor, volunteering at education and outreach events on campus or at outside venues such as K-12 schools, community centers, etc., being a session organizer at a professional conference, serving on a department committee, etc. For each item give the name of the activity, the organization served, and the dates of the activity.

Examples
Student-Led Research Scholarship and Creative Activities Proposal Review Committee
Office of Research, Montclair State University   *2024*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Optional and recommended for all. Use this section to list participation in workshops, short courses, training programs, etc. in which you learned tools, techniques, or new professional skills, especially those that support the project described in your proposal.

For each item list the full title of the activity, organization that delivered the activity, and dates of the activity.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Optional for all. Use this section to list awards, professional recognitions, honors, etc. For each item list the full title of the award, the organization that conferred the award, and the year in which you received the award. For students this may include induction in honor societies, outstanding presentation awards from a professional conference, a Montclair award or scholarship, etc.

In the following template please REPLACE prompts in italics and yellow highlights with your information.

Then REMOVE italics format, REMOVE the yellow highlights, and convert your entire CV to regular text.

Your Name

ORCID ID: URL (if you have one)

Your current position title

Your Department, Montclair State University
Your Montclair phone extension and email address

EDUCATION

Organization and Location	*Field of study*	*Degree*	*Year earned or anticipated*
Organization and Location	*Field of study*	*Degree*	*Year earned*
Organization and Location	*Field of study*	*Degree*	*Year earned*

APPOINTMENTS AND POSITIONS

Start year	*Current Position title, institution, location*
Start to End year	*Previous position title, institution, location*

RESEARCH PRODUCTS

* indicates a Montclair student author, § indicates other student authors

Publications
List full bibliographic citations for peer-reviewed publications here. Delete this subheading if there is nothing to report in this category.

Book chapters
List full bibliographic citations for book-chapters here. Delete this subheading if there is nothing to report in this category.

Abstracts and conference presentations
List full bibliographic citations for abstracts here. This includes oral and poster presentations. Remember to include presentations at Montclair's Student Research Symposium. Delete this subheading if there is nothing to report in this category.

Add other subheadings as appropriate for your discipline, for example Exhibitions, Performances, Software, Code, etc.

EXTERNAL GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

List full bibliographic citations for external grants here.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
List your service experiment here

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
List your professional development activities here

HONORS AND AWARDS
List noteworthy honors and awards here