

Mennonite College of Nursing University Research Grant

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What does URG stand for?

A: URG stands for University Research Grant.

Q: What is the purpose of the URG Program?

A: The purpose of the URG Program is to provide faculty with funds to develop research programs and support scholarly undertakings of the faculty.

Q: What counts as “research”?

A: For the MCN URG, research is defined as: *“A formal procedure which contributes to the expansion of basic knowledge or applies such knowledge to the solution of problems in society or exemplifies creative expression in a specific field of study. The results of research are communicated to professionals outside the university through a peer review process in a manner appropriate to the discipline.”*

Q: Who created the URG, and who is responsible for reviewing and awarding URG proposals?

A: The URG Program is an Illinois State University initiative. Each College administers their own grant(s). While each College has some autonomy related to the URG, there are several stipulations imposed by the University that we must follow.

Q: What is the maximum amount of financial support that I can receive from an MCN URG? Is there a minimum amount I can request?

A: For the MCN URG, \$4,000 is typically the maximum amount of funding that can be received. However, that amount could vary for each URG call for proposals, depending on University allocations of URG funding to the College. Maximum budget amounts will be communicated each time a URG call for proposals is established and sent out to faculty.

There is no minimum budget amount that can be requested.

Q: But what does a URG actually pay for?

A: The URG can pay for just about any aspect of scholarly work that supports faculty in developing their research programs and scholarly undertakings. Some examples of budget

items that could be supported include salary (see additional information below), student help, graduate assistants, extra help (civil service individuals), computer software, statistical analysis, photographic services, study materials, mailing, printing, food and drink, participant incentives, and travel.

Please remember that the University and State of Illinois stipulate how some funds can be used and what specific items will be paid for. You must be sure to comply with all regulations. If you have questions related to the budget and what can and cannot be included, please contact the MCN Director of Business & Finance. They are happy to answer your questions and direct you in the correct direction.

Q: I noticed that there are two categories of URGs on the guidelines document. What is the difference between “grant development” and “research development”?

A: The main difference is that proposals intended for grant development have a clear link to a future external award mechanism, or they may be intended to complement a current external grant award. For example, faculty may want to generate preliminary data or to test the feasibility of an intervention, prior to applying for a larger amount of external funding. Proposals submitted as research development do not have this explicit link to a grant.

When submitting a URG proposal, you will select whether the proposal is for grant development or research development. The required elements are essentially the same for both. The difference is that these two proposal types are scored a bit differently by the College Research Committee. Funding potential (external) and past record of external funding are considered for grant development proposals, while they are not in research development proposals.

Q: Can I use the URG to buy out some of my teaching time?

A: You may budget for up to a maximum of one month's salary or \$4,000, whichever is less, based on the URG guidelines. Realistically, this means you would likely *not* be able to buy out teaching time. However, these funds at least partially support faculty and recognize the time and effort required to conduct scholarly work. (You can think of it sort of like a stipend, though it is not technically classified this way.)

Q: Can I use the URG for additional summer pay?

A: Yes, you may. However, you may only budget for up to a maximum of one month's salary or \$4,000, whichever is less.

Q: If I am requesting salary, do I need to budget for anything else, or may I just ask for salary?

A: In reviewing URG proposals, the College Research Committee wants to see that faculty have a solid, feasible plan for completing scholarly work. If requesting salary, please be sure to explain how you will pay for other aspects of the work (as applicable), such as participant incentives, postage/ mailing, printing, and travel for data collection. Alternatively, these items may also be budgeted in the URG. If a faculty member submits a grant proposal and only

requests salary, even though multiple other expenses can be expected in order to complete the study, the College Research Committee may wonder if completion of the work is feasible as outlined in the submitted budget.

Q: When are URG proposals due, and how does the review process work?

A: Each College is different. At MCN, URG proposals are due the first Monday after spring break in March. The College Research Committee then reviews these proposals and informs faculty of a decision no later than early May. While the goal of the committee is to provide funding decisions as soon as possible, we guarantee a decision will be made and conveyed to grant applicants no later than early May, in case there are unexpected delays and to give committee members adequate time to carefully and completely review proposals. College Research Committee members who have a conflict of interest (e.g., have submitted a URG that is under review) will recuse themselves from the review process. Additional faculty from MCN may be asked to review proposals if too many College Research Committee members must recuse themselves.

**Note that additional calls for proposals may be established during other times of the year, if URG funds remain available after the typical March deadline and awarding of funds is complete.*

Q: If awarded, when does funding begin? Is there a deadline for spending the money?

A: The URG is funded based on State of Illinois fiscal years. Funding begins on the first day of the fiscal year, which is July 1, and the funds must be expended by the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30 of the next year.

For example, if a faculty member submitted a Fiscal Year 2027 URG on March 16, 2026, they would receive notice of funding no later than May of 2026. Then, they would be able to start spending the awarded funds on July 1, 2026 (the beginning of Fiscal year 2027). All funds would need to be expended by June 30, 2027 (the end of Fiscal Year 2027).

Q: May I use URG funds to pay for a student assistant (e.g., graduate assistant)?

A: You may. However, you must be sure to follow ISU policies related to student assistant work, including compensation requirements. Please contact the MCN Director of Business & Finance for details.

Q: I have startup funds or additional research support available to me. Does that disqualify me from submitting a URG proposal?

A: Having other financial support does not prohibit someone from submitting a URG proposal.

Q: Is the URG only for new faculty only, or can faculty who have been at MCN for many years apply?

A: While one objective of the URG is to support new faculty (less than 5 years since appointment to the tenure-track) and assist them in developing a program of research, the URG is not exclusively awarded to new faculty. Senior faculty (those on the tenure-track for 5 years or more) may still apply for the URG. Faculty status (new vs. senior) is one consideration in the funding decision process.

Q: Can tenured faculty apply, or is it only for tenure-track faculty who have not yet been awarded tenure?

A: Tenure-track and tenured faculty may apply.

Q: Can non-tenure track faculty apply?

A: No, only tenure-track and tenured faculty may apply, based on the ISU rules for University Research Grants.

Q: If I have some other funding available to cover other aspects of the research costs not included in the budget for the URG, such as startup funds or other grant funds, how should I convey that to the College Research Committee in my proposal?

A: In the budget section of the proposal, please specify that other costs associated with the study are being paid for by whatever other sources you have available. This information allows the College Research Committee to understand that you do have financial support available to make completing your project feasible (if you need more than the maximum of \$4,000 that the URG can fund, for example).

Q: Is any specific research design favored or more likely to receive funding?

A: All types of research will be considered. The goal of the URG Program is to support “research of the highest quality.” No specific design restrictions are imposed.

Q: When does the call for URGs come out? Where can I find the call?

A: The URG call for proposals typically comes out in fall, once MCN is informed of funding allocation by the University. This call for proposals is emailed to all tenured and tenure-track faculty at MCN, usually by the administrative assistant who supports the College Research Committee. Additionally, the call for proposals will be posted to the MCN URG website: <https://nursing.illinoisstate.edu/research/university-research-grant/>

Q: May I submit multiple URG proposals in a given year?

A: Yes, you may submit multiple URG proposals in the same year.

Q: Is there a maximum number of URGs that I may be awarded over the course of my time on faculty at MCN?

A: No, there is no maximum. However, after three successful Research Development URG awards, a faculty member must apply for a Grant Development URG or show evidence of a submission to an external funding agency in order to qualify to reapply for another Research Development grant.

Q: If I am awarded an MCN URG, how do I receive the funding? How is it distributed?

A: Generally, you will work with MCN's Business and Finance office for reimbursement and other necessary contracts for services. Upon finding out you have been awarded a URG, it is good practice to contact the Business and Finance office to discuss your grant plans and expenses to ensure you know what steps you need to take to properly expend the money and follow any relevant processes.

Q: If I am awarded an MCN URG, what are my responsibilities?

A: There are several:

- *The Professional Outcomes Form (see the URG call for proposals for a copy of this form) must be submitted twice:*
 - *The first form is due the first Monday in September after the end of the fiscal year in which funding was received. For example, if the grant was awarded for Fiscal Year 2027 (which runs from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027), the first outcomes form is Monday, September 6, 2027.*
 - *The second is due at the end of the second fiscal year after funding was received. (Using the above example, that would be Monday, September 4, 2028.)*
 - *Any unexpended funds should be returned following completion of the project or at the end of the fiscal year for which the grant was funded, whichever happens first.*
 - *Grant recipients must acknowledge the financial support from the MCN URG in all publications and/or presentations about the project.*
 - *Grant recipients are expected to present the results of their work to the MCN faculty in an appropriate dissemination forum no later than one year after the work is completed.*
 - *Faculty members who will not be returning to the University in the fall following the grant award must resign their grant.*
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Q: Where can I find more information about the MCN URG?

A: You can find more information at this website:

<https://nursing.illinoisstate.edu/research/university-research-grant/>

Q: May I see an example of a submitted URG?

A: Yes, you may. However, these are confidential/privileged documents and should not be shared elsewhere. To request an example, please contact the MCN Research Coordinator and/or the College Research Committee chairperson.

Q: Who should I contact with additional questions?

A: You should contact the MCN Research Coordinator and/or the College Research Committee chairperson.

This document was last reviewed and updated by the Mennonite College of Nursing College Research Committee: October 21, 2025.