UConn IDEA Grant Program
Tips for Preparing a Budget

The UConn IDEA Grant provides funding of up to $5,000 per student to support approved project work. Group project expenses may exceed the $5,000 limit, but all expenses will need to be clearly explained and justified in the group budget. Groups should not expect that each member will receive $5,000 in funding; all budgets will be closely scrutinized and awards will reflect justified project expenses.

The tips outlined below provide a starting point for students preparing an application for funding.

There are limitations on how UConn IDEA Grant funding can be used. <u>Not all purchases and expenses are allowable.</u> Before applying, students are encouraged to meet with the UConn IDEA Grant program coordinator about their budget and intended expenses to assure there are no conflicts.

Project Expenses

The UConn IDEA Grant does not cover the normal expenses of being a student, including course tuition and fees, room and board costs, commuting and parking expenses during the academic year, and personal expenses.

Applicants are encouraged to review all budget items carefully, and when possible, find economical ways to accomplish their goals.

Supplies and Consumables
Consider the supplies and materials you will need for each step of your project. Your project timeline can be a useful tool to guide you. Make note of what you will need for each step, and then consider the quantities you will need. From there, research where you can purchase the supplies and materials, and what the estimated costs will be.

Consumable Examples:
- Laboratory materials supplies
- Art supplies
- Research materials
- Teaching supplies
- Building or prototyping materials
- Books (only if not available through the UConn Library or borrowing is not feasible)
- Software (only if not available through campus computing resources, such as [UConn AnyWare](#))
- Publicity materials
- Printing expenses

Research or project supplies and consumables should be budgeted using reasonable estimates, documented to current costs. Applicants should consult their project mentor to determine what supplies and materials are available through the lab or department that they can use for their projects, if applicable.

Other Allowable Expenses
Other expenses should be justified by their relation to the proposed work and documented to current costs.
- Participant compensation or incentives (as approved by the IRB)
- Presentation, screening, or exhibition costs
- Equipment use fees
- Equipment rental costs
- Small equipment, such as audio recording devices or data storage device
- Poster printing expenses

Check multiple sources to determine the cost of each significant expenditure. Investigate if there is a more cost-effective alternative to reaching your goal, such as renting equipment.

Small equipment purchases must be pre-approved and may be subject to University purchasing requirements as well as University ownership of equipment once the project has ended. Students are encouraged to consult their project mentor to determine what equipment is available through the department and/or the University.

Purchase of durable equipment including, but not limited to, laptops, computers, cameras, or microscopes, is not allowed with IDEA Grant funding.

Travel
Travel away from your home during the semester or the summer may be budgeted as part of a proposal if the travel is necessary for the proposed project work.
- Airfare: Search the web to get an estimate of costs and use an average number for your budget. Take into account factors that may impact ticket prices, such as seasonal or holiday rates.
- Transportation, including vehicle fuel allowance, parking fees, taxi/shuttle/train or bus fare: Review information on the UConn Travel Services website for current mileage reimbursement rates. The mileage reimbursement rates and mileage charts provided on the Travel Services website will help you estimate your travel expenses.
  - *Please Note: Do not include* commuting from home to campus during fall or spring semester as part of your travel expenses. These costs are considered normal expenses of being a UConn undergraduate.
- Lodging: Review information on per-diem reimbursement rates on the Travel Services website to help you determine a reasonable estimate. You can also review travel booking websites to determine the average rates and lodging options during the time period you intend to travel.
- Meals: Review information on per-diem reimbursement rates on the Travel Services website to help you determine a reasonable estimate.
- International Travel: If you plan to travel outside the U.S. you will need to research and factor in the costs for visas and immunizations (if applicable), and health insurance while abroad. Also consider how much you may need for expenses such as phone and internet access.

Please note that funding cannot be used to cover fees for study abroad programs, internship placement programs, or volunteer placement programs.

Contract Services

Hiring or compensating assistants or contractors for internal or external services is only allowed on a limited basis. **Applicants are encouraged to meet with the UConn IDEA Grant program coordinator before applying to discuss the project needs to determine whether the contract services you need are allowable expenses under the grant.**

Stipend

A stipend will only be considered when time spent on the IDEA Grant project takes away from time that would otherwise be spent working.

You may not receive both academic credit and stipend funding at the same time for work on a UConn IDEA Grant project.

- For academic year projects, students may not exceed 10 hours per week of project work while classes are in session. Students may receive stipend funding for more than 10 hours per week during breaks. The maximum stipend for an academic year project cannot exceed $4,000, though most stipends will be less than $4,000.

If requesting a stipend, please include your estimated hours per week and weeks of project work on your budget.

- For example: I plan to spend 8 hours per week engaged in project work during the fall and spring semesters (14 weeks each) and an estimated 10 hours per week during winter break (4 weeks).

Important note for financial aid recipients:

If you are a financial aid recipient (including tuition waivers, residential assistant waivers, loans, grants, work-study employment), your financial aid package may be revised as a result of receiving a UConn IDEA Grant. Please contact the Office of Student Financial Aid Services at (860) 486-3474 to discuss how this might affect your financial aid package.

Other Funding Sources

If you have applied for or received funding from another source to cover expenses associated with your proposed project, you need to disclose that in your application. This includes UConn funding sources and external funding sources.

If your proposed project budget exceeds the UConn IDEA Grant funding limit ($5,000 for individual projects), please indicate your plan for covering additional project expenses. If your project mentor or research group has agreed to cover expense that exceed the grant, or if you have received funding from another source, indicate that on your budget.

If you have questions on preparing a budget or if you have a question about allowable expenses, please contact UConn IDEA Grant program coordinator Melissa Berkey at Melissa.berkey@uconn.edu. Students can also schedule a meeting with Melissa through Nexus or email.