



DEFINITIONS

for the VASSAR COLLEGE GRANT PROJECT SIGN-OFF FORM

Matching funds: Some grants are awarded on condition of the applicant securing additional funds to support the project. This may be an equivalent sum, hence “matching”; sometimes it may be even more (e.g., 2:1). Application guidelines will specify this requirement.

Cost sharing: Cost sharing refers to that portion of a grant project’s costs not borne by the funder and includes all contributions, including cash and in-kind, that a recipient makes to an award. As with matching funds, some grantmakers/programs require it; others do not, but may welcome it. When possible, it may be proposed as a signal of institutional commitment to the project, during and/or beyond the grant term.

Indirect costs: Indirect costs support the environment in which you carry out your research and scholarship, including administrative salaries and benefits, telecommunications, utilities, campus services and more. These are calculated on research personnel remuneration (e.g., summer salary), NOT on student stipends, course release, consultants, or other direct costs. **When possible, Vassar adheres to its rates as negotiated with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), currently 47% of modified, total direct costs (MTDC).**

MTDC includes direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of period of performance for the subaward), and *excludes* equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, and tuition remission, rental costs, scholarships fellowships, participant support costs, as well as the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000.

Some grantmakers prescribe limits to the percentage/amount of indirect costs that will be supported. ***Note: Fringe Benefits** are distinct from Indirect costs, and when itemized in a grant budget, are to be calculated on salaries/wages at 38% per Vassar College policy and practice. Federal funding agencies (NSF, NEH, etc.) generally require adherence to negotiated agreements for these rates.

Reassigned time for faculty: Reassignment of teaching time *for which the proposer must seek approval from the department chair and Dean of the Faculty.* For budgetary purposes, each unit (course) of reassigned time “costs” one unit, or 10% of the requestor’s institutional base salary (IBS). Each salaried faculty member is remunerated for ten (10) units active appointment per academic year, understood as: five (5) units devoted to teaching; four (4) units devoted to research; and one (1) unit for service. At a standard load of five (5) courses per academic year, one course equals 10%. Reassigned time is limited to one (1) course of reassigned time per academic year.

Calculation Example: Proposer with an IBS of \$65,000 would calculate for one course of reassigned time as follows:

$$65000 \times .10 = \$6,500$$

$$\text{Fringe benefits at 38\%: } 6,500 \times .38 = \$2,470$$

Total for one course of reassigned time = \$8,970 + indirect costs (see above) when the funding source permits.

Leave of absence: Will the project require release from teaching and other faculty duties for a semester or more? **Must be discussed and arranged in consultation with department chair and Dean of the Faculty well in advance.**

Hiring of additional staff: Refers to grant-supported personnel who will be “hired” as College employees for the duration of the grant (and, in some case, beyond). **Requires senior officer/Human Resources approval.** Consult with grants personnel for more information.

Human subjects: Refers to living individuals about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) Data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) Identifiable private information. Projects involving human subjects must be submitted to and reviewed by the Vassar College Institutional Review Board (IRB) *before* the project begins; for details see <https://pages.vassar.edu/institutionalreviewboard/>

Laboratory animals: Refers primarily to vertebrate animals in research, subject to various protocols and regulations. Projects involving vertebrate animals must be reviewed by Vassar’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), which reviews all matters related to their humane care and use, *before* the project is carried out. Consult with the Chair of IACUC for more information.

Recombinant DNA: Refers to (1) molecules that a) are constructed by joining nucleic acid molecules and b) that can replicate in a living cell, i.e. recombinant nucleic acids; (2) nucleic acid molecules that are chemically or by other means synthesized or amplified, including those that are chemically or otherwise modified but can base pair with naturally occurring nucleic acid molecules. Research involving recombinant DNA is subject to certain federal regulations and protocols, which must be understood *before* a grant application is submitted. Consult with Vassar’s grants personnel for more information.

Additional space, remodeling or construction: If your project involves building or renovation of physical space in or on College property (e.g., laboratory renovation), you must seek the assistance and approval of Buildings & Grounds Services *before* submitting a grant application.

Radioactive substance: acquisition/maintenance/disposal and

Toxic waste disposal: If your project will involve such substances *in excess of normal limits*, you must consult with departmental technical staff and/or the Director of Environmental Health & Safety to develop an appropriate plan *before* submitting a grant application.

Summer salary: Salary sought from a grant for research/scholarly effort during the summer months when the College is not in session. Usually calculated as **one month summer salary = 1/9 of annual base salary**. Some funders prescribe limits to the summer salary that can be requested (e.g., NSF will only permit two months’ summer salary at 100% effort per investigator in a given project year).

Student/faculty travel abroad: If your project will take you abroad, your destination may be affected by natural disaster, disease outbreak, political unrest, or other factors that may put you,

students, or other participants at risk. Usually only an issue if your plans involve developing countries or remote areas. Educate yourself well in advance, and consult the U.S. Department of State for advisories and updates: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

Students and/or post-doctorates participating in research: Will your grant involve student research assistants or participants, or post-doctorate participants? Some funders and agencies have special regulations regarding student/post-doc involvement. Students and post-docs funded by NSF, for example, must be “trained” in responsible conduct of research. For more details, please see

https://grants.vassar.edu/docs/Responsible_Conduct%20of_Research.Statement_and%20Instructions.pdf and consult with Vassar’s grants personnel for additional information.

Acquisition of computer or other technology or other computer-related hardware, software or support:

If your grant will request funds to acquire computing equipment, software, or other technology that may require support and/or maintenance by Computing & Information Services (CIS), you should consult with CIS staff well in advance. CIS can also be helpful in advising on best prices from approved vendors.

A commitment by the College beyond the grant period: If your grant project will commit the College to personnel, equipment, funding, or other significant considerations beyond the grant period, this must be approved by the appropriate departments, senior officers, and/or other officials *before* the grant application is submitted. Consult with Vassar’s grants personnel for more information.

Reporting: Nearly all grantmakers require regular reports on project activities and budgetary status as a condition of an award. Awardees are responsible for the timely submission of such reports as directed by the funder, but Vassar’s grants and Accounting personnel are willing and able to help. Consult with Vassar’s grants personnel for more information.

Conflict of Interest: College faculty or academic staff applying for outside grants may be involved in the affairs of other institutions and organizations. It is unlikely that an effective faculty will consist of individuals entirely free from at least perceived conflicts of interest. Although most such potential conflicts are and will be deemed to be inconsequential, it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that the College is made aware of situations that involve business relationships that could represent a conflict of interest (including financial) with respect to an outside grant. Consult with Vassar’s grants personnel and/or the Controller’s Office for more information.

QUESTIONS? We’re here to help!
send an email to: grants@vassar.edu