

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The **Transdisciplinary Teams (T²)** program, sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise (REDKE) at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), is offering seed grants to support UTSA faculty members to engage in scholarly research activities that foster transdisciplinary collaborations. The **primary goal** of these awards is to assemble teams of researchers from different disciplines that will establish a foundation to seek extramural funding, ultimately advancing UTSA's research excellence goals (Carnegie R1, NRUF, AAU, etc.).

Transdisciplinary Research is defined as research efforts conducted by investigators from different disciplines working jointly to create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and translational innovations that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem. Transdisciplinary teams allow members to bring their individual expertise to bear; however, are expected to work together from the beginning to develop approaches to a problem rather than first developing approaches within their disciplines and then bringing those individual ideas together to formulate a final solution.

Preference will be given to proposals that:

- Build or strengthen transdisciplinary research collaborations (*see Eligibility & Application Limits below for further detail*)
- Have significant scientific merit, including significance, innovation, originality of approach, technical merit and consistency with institutional initiatives and goals
- Have a high potential for extramural funding

Seed funding received through this program is intended to strengthen project competitiveness for the pursuit of long-term extramural funds. Successful applicants must produce a new proposal for extramural funding as a final reporting requirement within one year of completion of the seed grant award.

ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION LIMITS

- PIs and Co-PIs must be full-time, tenure track or tenured faculty at UTSA in residence at the time of application. *Other personnel or students can be incorporated into a project team, including individuals outside UTSA, however, only those who are UTSA employees or UTSA students can be funded through this program.*
- Proposed project must be a collaboration among a minimum of three (3) faculty from at least three (3) distinct departments, housed in at least (2) colleges.
- A faculty member may be designated as PI (primary applicant) on only one proposal (either as a new or revised proposal) each application cycle. However, an individual may serve in a Co-PI or other collaborative role on more than one application each cycle. It is the PI's responsibility to ensure all team members are eligible and not exceeding application limitations.

- If a T² application was not funded in FY20, then for the FY21 application cycle, the applicant is allowed one resubmission of a revised proposal on the same subject. *Note: Revised proposals must provide a cover letter as an appendix indicating changes from previous proposal and responses to reviewer comments.*
- Applicants submitting a proposal closely related to a project previously funded by REDKE must demonstrate that the new application is substantially different from the prior award.

The following are ineligible for funding through the FY22 T² program:

- Faculty who were awarded T² funding in FY21 (Perf. Period: 9/1/20 – 8/31/21)
- Faculty who have any outstanding reports under previously funded REDKE awards
- Gap funding to bridge support between external grants or contracts
- Proposals that have been submitted to and are pending review from an extramural agency or those already reviewed and found non-competitive by an extramural agency. *Exception: Proposals previously submitted to an extramural agency that were declined on the basis of insufficient preliminary data or evidence of prior collaboration amongst team members. The Seed Grant Review Committee will consider such proposals only if the applicant submits, as an appendix, a copy of the original application as well as an executive summary statement or official letter from the agency specifically stating the deficiency or absence of preliminary data.*
- Projects proposed for REDKE seed grant funding must have that do not have a distinct scope. If more than one application is submitted to this or other REDKE seed grant programs, all like applications may be deemed ineligible.

AWARD INFORMATION

- **Estimated Number of Awards:** 5, subject to availability of funds
- **Maximum Total Funding Per Project:** \$20,000
- **Performance Period:** October 1, 2021 – July 31, 2022*
*Funding not spent by July 1, 2021 will automatically revert back to VPREDKE. This excludes salaries and wages, which can continue to be expensed through July 31, 2021. No project extensions will be allowed.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

December 15, 2020	Request for Proposals (RFP) released
March 8, 2021*	Notice of Intent due to seedgrants@utsa.edu (by 5:00pm CST)
March 24, 2021*	Applications due in InfoReady (by 5:00pm CST)
June 2, 2021	Awards announced
October 1, 2021	Grant performance period begins (funds available)
March 1-15, 2022	Project Update Meeting requested by REDKE
July 1, 2022	All funds must be spent (<i>see Award Information section above</i>)
July 31, 2022	Grant performance period ends (<i>unspent funds will be swept August 2</i>)
August 31, 2022	Final project report due
August 31, 2023	Extramural grant submission report due

* Extended deadline due to inclement weather.

NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) INSTRUCTIONS

Information provided in NOIs will not be considered final and can be revised for full application submission, however, will be used by REDKE to prepare for review.

Email the following to seedgrants@utsa.edu by **5pm CST on March 8, 2021**:

- Email subject line: **NOI - T² Program**
Include in Email body:
 - PI name, email, college and department
 - Co-PIs name, college and department
 - Proposed project title
 - 3-5 sentence project overview

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

There is a two-part routing and submission process for this opportunity.

1. Route application through a Research Service Center (RSC), utilizing the UTSA Routing and Cayuse systems. This benefits UTSA PIs and Co-PIs, as it allows this activity to be tracked within REDKE proposal and award dashboards. [Contact your respective Research Service Center \(RSC\)](#) to complete an [Intake Form](#) at the start of proposal development to initiate Research Service Center coordination.
2. Submit application through REDKE's [InfoReady site](#) by **5pm CST on March 24, 2021**. *InfoReady applicant guide with video available [here](#).*

Regulatory Compliance:

Projects are subject to [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#), [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee \(IACUC\)](#), [Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\)](#), export control, conflict of interest, and campus safety regulations and approvals. The PI is expected to have thoroughly investigated all [regulatory components](#) of the intended research and to have discussed relevant components in the proposal. Prior to making an award, required protocols must be in place.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Application components required at the time of submission are listed below. If components are missing and/or formatting is not compliant, the application will not be reviewed.

Formatting requirements for items with an asterisk (*) below: single-spaced, no less than 12pt Times New Roman font, 1" margins all around.

Component	Maximum Length
1. Abstract	250 words (<i>enter in InfoReady</i>)
2. Project Description*	5 pages
3. Key References*	1 page
4. Plan for Extramural Support*	2 pages
5. Budget	Use seed grant template
6. Budget Justification*	2 pages
7. Biographical Sketch from PI/Co-PIs*	2 pages
8. Current, Pending, and Recent Support*	No limit (<i>use seed grant template</i>)
9. Signed Grant Agreement	<i>See end of this document</i>

<i>Appendices, if applicable</i>	
10. For revised FY21 seed grant application: Cover Letter*	1 page
11. For consideration of unfunded extramural proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of original proposal • Copy of executive summary statement or official letter from the agency specifically stating the deficiency or absence of preliminary data 	

1. ABSTRACT

InfoReady will prompt you to include a clear executive summary (or abstract) that summarizes the essential content of the proposed research effort, including the objectives, benefits, and significance.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION (5 PAGE LIMIT, including graphics)

The project description must include, in this order:

- General background: Describe how the project relates to institutional strategic initiatives and priorities
- Scientific merit and significance of the research: Address how this project is transdisciplinary in nature and the potential impact it will have for the research team, UTSA, and the San Antonio community (if applicable)
- Impact of this research on society and areas where this research can or will be applied
- Specific goals, objectives and anticipated results
- Description of methods including anticipated barriers or technical difficulties
- Resources needed for this project (equipment, space, etc.) and their availability

Appendices are only allowed for the following:

	Appendix Attachment	Instructions
Resubmission of an unfunded FY21 T ² application	Cover letter	Indicate changes from previous proposal and responses to reviewer comments.
Application previously submitted to an extramural agency that was declined on the basis of insufficient preliminary data	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copy of previous submission 2. Copy of reviewer critiques/comments 	Copy of the original application as well as an executive summary statement or official letter from the agency specifically stating the deficiency or absence of preliminary data.

NOTICE REGARDING CONFIDENTIALITY: It is important that you consult the [Office of Commercialization and Innovation](#) before disclosing details of any research that may be patentable. Any confidential information in this proposal must be clearly identified by marking "Confidential" at the top and bottom of each page where the confidential information appears.

3. KEY REFERENCES (1 PAGE LIMIT)

Attach a list of references relevant to the project.

4. PLAN FOR EXTRAMURAL SUPPORT (2 PAGE LIMIT)

Attach a specific plan for pursuit of extramural funding after completion of this project. Submission of at least one extramural proposal is required as part of the grant award terms and must be completed within one year of the completion of the award term.

Provide the following details in your plan for extramural support:

- *Sponsor/Program:* What extramural funding program(s) do you plan to pursue? List specific program(s), deadlines you will target, and how you will leverage results of this seed grant for external support.
- *Objectives:* What will the extramural proposal seek to accomplish and how is it specifically supported by this seed funding? What is the societal impact of the proposed work?
- *Team:* Who are your team members from UTSA and other partnering organizations? Briefly describe their skills related to the project. More people can be involved in your extramural funding proposal team than are budgeted in this seed grant.
- *Pre-review:* Who will read and comment on your external proposal before it is submitted? Having a colleague review your grant application prior to submission significantly increases the likelihood of being funded.

5. BUDGET (UTILIZING UTSA TEMPLATE)

Budgets must be submitted solely on the UTSA approved budget template ([Internal Seed Grant Budget Template](#)). Contact your respective [Research Service Center](#) (RSC) for assistance with completing the budget template.

6. BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (2 PAGE LIMIT)

Details for all proposed expenditures must be described in a budget justification attachment. The budget justification must convey an integrated understanding of the types of resources (labor, materials, other) necessary to complete the proposed research project. For each line item, provide detailed calculations at how you arrived at totals/estimates, and note whether funds will be expensed during the academic year (October – May), summer (June – July) or both.

Budget Considerations

Funds **can** be used for:

- Salaries and/or wages for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate and undergraduate students. *This program is exempt from the 1% effort requirement in UTSA's HOP. However, if a faculty member does request funded effort, each faculty member is limited to no more than 1 summer month of effort. These limitations are in place to encourage the use of funds for student support.* For most T/TT faculty, 1 summer month is the equivalent of 1/9th of your base annual academic salary contract amount. *Fringe benefits are paid centrally and should be excluded from the budget worksheet.*
- Materials and supplies (*any item with a cost of less than \$5,000/unit; must be justified as needed for project success*)
- Expenses for field work, data collection, archival research, training, educational

purposes and/or presentations on research, creative or scholarly activities directly related to the proposed project

- Consultant fees
- Contracts for activities outside of UTSA (*must be clearly and convincingly described as necessary for successful execution of the proposed project*)
- Domestic travel (data collection, conference presentation, meeting with a collaborator). *Travel must adhere to [UTSA Financial Management Operational Guidelines](#) and [GSA per diem rates](#).*

Funds **cannot** be used for:

- Fringe benefits
- Equipment (*unit cost of \$5,000 and useable life of greater than one year*)
- International travel
- Non-UTSA employee travel
- Stipends, scholarships and/or tuition
- Indirect costs (F&A) costs
- Payment of salaries to non-UTSA personnel
- Refreshments. *Includes food/refreshments for participants, business meals. Excludes meals while on travel.*
- Hosting conferences, workshops or seminars
- Travel to visit program officers

If additional resources are available to support this project through other sources, the budget justification should include a list of these resources, noting when the resource will be available and who it will be provided by. **Examples include** lab or studio time, equipment, computer resources, and research assistantships made available through a department, as well as support obtained from external sources

Note - If awarded, applicants may transfer up to 25% of the award between spending categories (line items) without written permission from REDKE, as long as the category is contained in the original budget approved by the Seed Grant Review Committee.

7. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (2 PAGE LIMIT)

Biographical sketch attachments must be included for PI and any Co-PIs. [NIH](#) or [NSF](#) format must be used.

8. CURRENT, PENDING AND OTHER RECENT SUPPORT (NO LIMIT, USE SEED GRANT TEMPLATE)

Details for all current, pending and other recently funded (within last 3 years, if already complete) projects must be described in an attachment. The following must be included for each project:

- Label of Pending, Current, or Other Recently Funded
- Project Proposal Title
- Source of Support (i.e., sponsor name)

- Total Award Amount
- Total Award Period Covered (e.g., 9/1/20 – 8/31/21)
- Person Months Per Year Committed to Project (i.e., academic and/or summer months)

9. GRANT AGREEMENT (SEE END OF THIS DOCUMENT)

Each PI (applicant) and Co-PI (co-applicant) must have this document signed by their Department Chair, acknowledging that they have also read all responsibilities and obligations of the applicant and their Department.

PEER REVIEW

Proposals will be reviewed by external reviewers selected by the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise.

- Proposals will be reviewed by a panel with broad expertise and a track record in identifying innovations – these reviewers may not be deep domain experts in your field. *As such, proposals should be clearly written in a way that the goals, rationale and methods of the proposed work can be understood by all reviewers.* Avoid discipline-specific terminology/jargon as much as possible.
- The External Review Committee will review proposals and make recommendations to the REDKE office. Funding decisions will be based primarily on the Committee's recommendations; however, final decisions will rest with the REDKE Office.
- **Proposals will be evaluated based on the weighted criteria below.** The PI is expected to include all required proposal components and to fully and clearly address each criteria.

<u>Review Criteria</u>	<u>Max Point Allocation</u>
Did the proposal describe in sufficient detail and provide strong justification for the scientific merit and significance of this research?	15
Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the project objectives?	15
Is the project clearly transdisciplinary in nature, aiming to create new conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and/or translational innovations that integrate and move beyond discipline-specific approaches to address a common problem?	15
Is this a new project that does not overlap with other currently funded projects?	10
Are the goals, objectives and anticipated results stated clearly and are they reasonable, given the funds, and time provided?	10
Did the proposal address a feasible plan to obtain extramural funding to support the project in future years?	5
Did the proposal describe the broader impact to the field and to society?	5
Are potential difficulties, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?	5
Did the proposal specify the resources needed for this project (labor, equipment, materials, etc.) and indicate their availability?	5

Did the proposal outline a spending plan and thoroughly address each expenditure with a clear justification and calculations? Do expenditures align with proposed scope of work?	
Did the applicant (or team) convey through their biographical sketches that they have appropriate experience and training? And, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)?	5
Total Points Possible	100

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

The PI (applicant) is responsible for the administration of grant funds. All grant expenditures must conform to state and university regulations and approvals. In particular, the PI must be certain that over-expenditures do not occur, and that all funds are fully expended according to programmatic deadlines. All work must be completed within the performance period.

INTERIM AND FINAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A Project Update Meeting/Report will be requested by REDKE staff in March 2022. Applicants awarded funding under this opportunity will be required to submit their final report to REDKE using the UTSA Seed Grant Reporting Form, capturing both quantitative and qualitative output. Awardees will be provided final reporting instructions prior to the end of their project. The PI (applicant) is responsible for submitting a Final Grant Report no later than **August 31, 2022**. A final report must be filed with REDKE in order for members of the project team to be considered for future REDKE Seed Grant funding.

Extramural Grant Submission Required

Awardees must produce a new proposal for extramural funding as part of the final report within one year of completion of this project. In exceptional cases, where seed funding may prove the project non-competitive, a waiver of the extramural application requirement can be requested from REDKE. If neither an extramural proposal nor waiver is submitted, no new REDKE research funds will be made available to the PI (applicant) or Co-PIs (co-applicants) until an extramural proposal or waiver is submitted. **The applicants must submit a report to the REDKE describing the extramural grant submission details by August 31, 2022.**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ana Laredo
 Research Program Coordinator
 Office of Strategic Research Initiatives
 Email: seedgrants@utsa.edu

If this research proposal is funded, I agree that my acceptance obligates me to:

1. Maintain program eligibility throughout the award/performance period, including residence and employment with UTSA. If there is any change in employment or residency status, the PI and/or their direct supervisor (department chair or dean) may notify REDKE staff at seedgrants@utsa.edu.

2. Include the following acknowledgement on all publications resulting from this grant award.

“This project was funded (full or in-part) by The University of Texas at San Antonio, Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise.”

3. If human subjects, animals, or biohazardous materials will be utilized in the research, protocols to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), or Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) must be approved prior to funds being released.

4. Secure prior written approval from the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise if the research to be conducted differs from that described in the proposal that was funded. Requests for such approval should be submitted to:

Office of Strategic Research Initiatives
Email: seedgrants@utsa.edu

5. Submit at least one extramural proposal for funding to support the future progress of the project, within one year of the completion of the T² award period.

6. Adhere to the assigned T² PROGRAM TIMELINE:

October 1, 2021 – Grant performance period begins (i.e., funds available)

March 1-15, 2022 – Project Update Meeting Requested by REDKE

July 1, 2022 – All funds must be spent

July 31, 2022 – Grant Performance Period Ends (Unspent funds swept on August 2)

August 31, 2022 – Final project report due

August 31, 2023 – Extramural grant submission report due

7. Respond to all inquiries and communications from the Office of the Vice President for Research, Economic Development & Knowledge Enterprise related to this funded project.

8. Participate as a reviewer on Seed Grant Review Committee(s) during award period.

Principal Investigator (PI)

Signature: _____

Project Name: _____

Date: _____

Direct Supervisor – I agree with PI’s obligation & responsibilities for this funding opportunity.

Approved by: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

