Emerging Areas of Research Funding Program FAQs

**What is the Emerging Areas of Research program, and how did it come about?**
A. The Indiana University Bloomington Strategic Plan calls for the campus to invest significant resources to support research and creative activity. These investments include the Emerging Areas of Research Funding Program (EAR) at IU Bloomington. The Emerging Areas of Research Funding Program seeks to support outstanding areas of research and creative activity on the IU Bloomington campus that are novel or established, but in need of support that would establish or increase the stature of the area.

**What’s the difference between the Emerging Areas of Research program and the Grand Challenges program?**
A. The IU Bloomington EAR Program is separate, unique, and distinct from the Grand Challenges Program, which is a university-wide initiative. Not all research proposals will fit in the scale of the Grand Challenges program. Faculty who have not been involved in a Grand Challenge team are encouraged to submit to the EAR program. Also, teams not selected in a Grand Challenge competition can repurpose or downsize their proposal for submission to the EAR program. Ultimately, the university’s vision is to have multiple Emerging Areas and Grand Challenges, all moving forward and making an impact.

**What are the criteria for selecting an Emerging Area of Research?**
A: The following criteria will guide evaluation of an emerging area of research (or creative activity). A successful EAR initiative:
- Represents a complex, novel, and significant investigation (which may be either discipline-specific or multidisciplinary)
- Strategically addresses an existing strength at IU Bloomington for which the addition of resources will make the area world-class among peers or recognized for identifying and executing a novel approach
- Identifies an area of research or creative activity where the campus can become more competitive with the addition of key faculty and that serves the broader goals of the schools/College
- Outlines well-defined, achievable goals that can be measured quantitatively and qualitatively
- Strategically leverages IU Bloomington’s existing resources and potentially resources outside of the IU community
- Has the potential to attract the external competitive, philanthropic, corporate, and/or government funding necessary to sustain the area.

**Is the EAR program intended to fund only projects in the sciences?**
A. No. Faculty from across the IU Bloomington campus, in all disciplinary areas, are encouraged to apply. The EAR is intended to support promising areas in the arts and humanities as well as in basic and applied sciences. The overall goal is to significantly
enhance the volume, quality, impact, and reputation of research and/or creative activity at IU Bloomington, regardless of discipline.

In disciplinary areas where external funding is less common, how will proposals be reviewed relative to those proposals in disciplines where external funding is far more frequent?
A. The relevance of potential to attract external funding as a review criterion will be assessed in relation to and as appropriate to the particular discipline. Proposals in disciplines where commercialization possibility and external funding prospects are not directly relevant or feasible will not be judged by these criteria. Reviewers will judge and weight the potential to attract external funds according to the type of funding generally available in the relevant area or discipline. Also, it is important to note that scoring of review criteria is only one piece of the overall review process. Proposals that reach the second stage of the review process (see below) will receive additional in-depth discussion from the faculty review panel.

How much funding will a selected Emerging Area of Research project receive?
A: The campus anticipates funding up to six EAR initiatives over the next five years. Typically, EAR will be an annual competition with a goal of supporting one to two initiatives per round. For each EAR award, funding will be distributed over four consecutive years. For each four-year EAR award, the campus anticipates investing approximately $3 million in cash, in addition to financing 1-3 faculty lines (as base) per initiative. The base salaries for new faculty lines are not included in the $3M, but 50% of startup costs for new faculty lines will be funded from the $3M. Aside from the hiring of new faculty, the $3 million in cash will finance all other costs besides the ones listed as non-allowable costs in the RFP.

How will salaries for new hires be handled?
A. For six years, the Provost’s office will provide salary support to the unit for the new faculty hires. After six years, the faculty lines will be transferred to the school or college where the faculty reside.

Why are one-page abstracts required in advance of the proposals?
A. The EAR one-page abstracts are not pre-proposals; they will be used to gauge the number and scope of full proposals planned. The one-page abstracts also will help to inform the composition of the review panel for the full proposals. The abstracts will be made public on the OVPR website. One-page abstracts are required and should include the title of the proposal, lead investigator(s) contact information, and a paragraph describing the emerging area of research or creative activity that will be proposed.

For the one-page abstracts, should the short description be a statement of the general area, or a more specific statement of the specific research questions expected to be addressed in the final proposal?
A. A broad description of the general issues of the planned EAR proposal is fine, and if available, a brief outline of the research questions. These questions will not be used
to make any pre-judgment of the proposal, but rather to inform the review process and to give OVPR an estimate of the scope, breadth, and number of proposals anticipated. In other words, for the full proposal, you will not be held to addressing exactly the research questions as sketched in the abstract.

**Will any feedback be provided on the one-page abstracts? Is there going to be an early vetting process? For example, if an idea is unlikely to have a chance, will faculty get some feedback to that effect?**

A. The purpose of the one-page abstracts is to get an idea of how many possible EAR initiatives are being planned and a sense of their types, range, and scope. There will not be any "first cut" after the June 15 submission. However, the list of relevant abstracts will be sent to the relevant deans so the deans also know the number and titles of possible EAR initiatives within their academic unit. Because deans will need to provide a letter of support, faculty are urged to check that their dean (and also their associate dean for research who will also likely be part of the conversation) is supportive of the potential area of research being submitted for EAR funding. Staff from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research are happy to meet with any of the Emerging Areas of Research teams to discuss their planned proposal at any time, but feedback will not be systematically provided for all groups as a step in the procedure.

**Why are no pre-proposals required in the EAR process?**

A. We want to encourage a breadth of ideas and possibilities; therefore, we are asking for one-page abstracts that outline preliminary ideas but are not requiring a more in-depth pre-proposal. That said, EAR applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their ideas with the chairs and deans in their respective departments and schools before submitting. **Alignment with existing goals of the applicant’s school or college is essential.** See a suggested proposal development timeline on the web: http://ovpr.indiana.edu/files/5714/6066/6677/EAR_2016_timeline_guide.pdf.

**Will OVPR provide assistance for applicants that need to negotiate with more than one dean?**

A. Yes, OVPR staff and Vice Provost for Research Rick Van Kooten will be happy to assist. Contact them through earprogram@indiana.edu.

**How will proposals be reviewed?**

A: The EAR proposal review process will be conducted in four stages. The first stage of the process consists of each proposal being reviewed by an equal number of reviewers primarily from the disciplines covered by the proposed work. The reviewers will assign a numerical score to the proposal’s success in addressing the goals of the program. In the second stage, a faculty review panel will meet in person to discuss each proposal, weigh its responsiveness to the review criteria, and evaluate its relative strength compared to other proposals. The faculty review panel will select a shortlist of finalist proposals. In the third stage, the shortlist of finalist proposals will be given additional review by the respective academic dean of the originating school or center. Finally, reviews of all shortlist proposals will be provided to the Provost and to the Vice Provost for Research, who will make the final funding decision.
Following the award decision, OVPR will provide each PI with a summary of their proposal’s strengths and weaknesses. All proposals not selected for EAR in the first round may be revised and resubmitted in the future. In addition, depending on the assessments of the review panel, the respective deans, and the score of a proposal, some proposals may be considered for other types of institutional funding competitions. For example, proposals that have a strategic relationship to a Grand Challenge initiative already identified for funding could potentially be evaluated and funded under a future Grand Challenge initiative. OVPR will make every effort to identify other sources of funding (including corporate, philanthropic, external, and state sources) for proposals that are not selected for EAR but are nonetheless competitive to attract further funding and support.

How will decisions be made about new faculty hires and other investments related to Emerging Areas of Research proposals? How will start-up funding work?
A: Total EAR budgets must include half the estimated cost of start-ups for new faculty hires, as well as all other expenses. The remaining cost of faculty start-ups must be covered by the unit or units supporting the project. It is expected that not all new hires will be at a senior level.

What expenses are allowable as "start-up costs" for new faculty lines (moving expenses? office computer & other office equipment? personal research account funds? etc.)?
A. All of these are allowable expenses. However, when a faculty member is hired, there will be a negotiation of his or her start-up package, i.e., what is given in the proposal is only notional and meant to be a rough estimate of the scale/scope of a potential start-up. Given this, smaller items in a typical start-up would very much be within the uncertainties of the final size of start-up costs.

Can costs associated with a research scientist be included in the budget costs? For example, can we include 50% FTE of a research scientist position? Or a couple of research scientists that together total more than 100% FTE (2 research scientists at 75% FTE each)?
A. Under "Costs not allowed", the full-year salary for any academic appointee (including sabbatical leave) refers only to faculty members, either new ones or current faculty at IU Bloomington. Under "Allowable costs", postdocs/research scientists and graduate students are allowed with appropriate justification. These are academic appointments that can be included in the budget at any % FTE level.

In addressing new faculty hires under “Application Components/Research Plan/New positions proposed,” is it necessary to include specific names of faculty and the institutions from where the faculty may be recruited?
A: No, please do not include specific names or institution affiliation in your proposal where you are addressing the impact of new faculty hires.

Under "Costs Not Allowed", it says that collaborators are allowed from
other IU campuses or institutions, but they may not receive any support from EAR funds. Does paying for a collaborator's travel to IU Bloomington and hotel/hospitality expenses in Bloomington count as "support"?

A. In this case, no, this would not count as "support". By "support" we are more intending salary support.

**What is the duration of salary support?**

A. Salary for new faculty does **not** come from the $3M cash funding since salary lines would go into base funding, with such costs covered by the Provost and relevant school/College, with the sharing negotiated. The bottom line is: the salary for new faculty should not show up in the budget; 50% of start-up costs are included (since they are one-time funding outlays).

**How long will the funding for a selected Emerging Areas of Research initiative last?**

A: Four (4) years.

**Are there reporting requirements?**

A: Yes. Successful applicants will be required to submit an annual progress report by January 1 of every year following the start of EAR funding. This report must include a new budget for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Additional data for the report will include:

- Percentage of initiative completed
- Progress towards metrics and deliverables stated in the proposal
- Resulting hires
- Resulting publications, performances, conferences, exhibits—titles, dates, venues, bibliographic info, new research methodologies
- Impact of EAR award on applying for external funding—titles, agencies, date submitted (past and future), amounts requested, status, awarded amount
- Recognition—awards, honors, prizes, reviews
- Budget report outlining funds utilization
- New fiscal year budget (July 1-June 30)

Successful applicants will be required to submit a full report no later than six months after the end of the award. Requested data will include:

- Summary of results during the course of the initiative and how they addressed the initial EAR goals
- Success towards metrics and deliverables stated in the proposal
- Hiring goals and implementation
- Budget report outlining funds utilization and details on any expenditure(s) outside of the approved budget
- Resulting publications, performances, conferences, exhibits—titles, dates, venues, bibliographic info, new research methodologies
- Progress in applying for external funding - titles, agencies, date submitted
(past and future), amounts requested, status, awarded amount
• Recognition: awards, honors, prizes, reviews
• Additional follow-up information may be requested outside of the progress report, to determine the ongoing efficacy of the EAR funding program.

Awardees will be required to present the outcomes of the EAR initiative at a special symposium planned by OVPR and held no more than one year after the end of the award.

**How does the Emerging Areas of Research program affect other internal research funding programs at IU Bloomington?**
A: Although IU Bloomington is directing considerable funding and effort toward the Emerging Areas of Research Funding Program, the EAR is by no means the only program arising from the Bicentennial Strategic Plan nor the only effort IU Bloomington is making to foster excellence in research. Schools and the campus will continue with existing plans regarding faculty hires and investments in research infrastructure, as well as other strategic research initiatives.

**Where is the money for funding Emerging Areas of Research coming from?** A: Primary sources of funding are coming from the IU Bloomington Office of the Provost and the IU Bloomington Office of the Vice Provost for Research.

**How do I get more information?**
A. Contact earprogram@indiana.edu or visit the OVPR website at http://ovpr.indiana.edu/ear.