

Presidential Space Exploration Research Fellowships

Program Overview

The University of Cincinnati (UC) Office of Research is pleased to announce a cost-sharing funding opportunity to advance graduate student involvement in new innovative research broadly related to **space exploration and space-related science and technology**. A total of **\$450,000** is available through this program for proposals submitted through December 31, 2026. The funds are intended to be used as cost-sharing in proposals for external funding to supplement graduate student support, with the goal of attracting the most competitive students to research in space exploration. This investment reflects UC's continuing commitment to supporting space-exploration related research and advancing the goals outlined in the Research 2030 strategic plan. By empowering UC's talented graduate students and the faculty who mentor them, this program aims to catalyze discoveries, enhance UC's competitiveness in external funding, and contribute meaningfully to the future of space science and technology.

Program Goals

This funding initiative is designed to:

- Support outstanding graduate students whose work advances space exploration in any discipline, including (but not limited to) engineering, materials science, physics, biology, biomedical science, geoscience, computer science, social sciences, health sciences, and other related fields.
- Promote innovative, interdisciplinary approaches that bring together diverse expertise to tackle space-related challenges.
- Strengthen UC's research enterprise by positioning faculty for successful external funding, including new proposals, competitive renewals, and submissions to targeted opportunities.
- Advance UC's strategic vision under Next Lives Here, including inclusive excellence, cross-disciplinary research, and real-world impact.

Funding Details

- **Award Amounts:** Individual awards are expected to be up to \$10,000 per year in stipend support, plus fringe benefits, for each graduate student supported. Awards cannot be used for tuition.
- **Additional Funding Requirement:** Each award must be matched by at least \$25,000 per year per student for stipend support, plus fringe benefits, in the budget of the PI's external proposal. Tuition costs must be met by the external sponsor or university.
- The total base stipend between the external proposal and Space Fellow supplement shall not exceed \$35,000 in year one. Inflation may be built into the budget at an increase rate of 3% per year after year one.
- **Project Period:** Up to 3 years from the date of award.
- If the sponsor does not allow voluntary, committed cost share, then the submitting college business office must approve a base stipend amount that does not include the Office of Research supplement, which may be lower than standard rate of the unit.

Eligibility

- **Principal Investigators:** Must be UC faculty members with at least an 80% FTE appointment. The PI's primary appointment must be at UC, not at one of UC's affiliate institutions.
- **Graduate Students:** Must be enrolled and in good academic standing with a GPA of at least 3.6 at UC at the time of award.
- Research must be **broadly related to space exploration**, including fundamental science, applied technology, human health and performance, or other relevant areas.

Instructions

Proposals should address the following criteria:

1. **Target a specific external funding opportunity.** Applicants must clearly identify the federal, industry, or foundation funding call they are targeting. Focus areas include, but are not limited to, aerospace engineering and technology development for space exploration, astrophysics, human performance aspects of space exploration, planetary geoinformatics and environmental monitoring, and education and policy. Therefore, this funding is a supplemental funding opportunity to a competitive external proposal. Competitive renewals of active awards also qualify.
2. **Demonstrate high potential for long-term impact.** Projects should show how proposed work could lead to sustained research activity, publications, and future funding.
3. **Advance UC's interdisciplinary strengths.** Proposals involving multiple disciplines, Units, or colleges are encouraged.
4. **Contribute to Research 2030 and Next Lives Here goals.** Projects that strengthen UC's research enterprise, foster collaboration, or accelerate innovation will be competitive.

To apply, visit <https://research.uc.edu/funding/overview>.

QUESTIONS? Contact research@uc.edu