REAL Program

Ready to Experience Applied Learning
Expanding Student Horizons Through Real World Connections

The REAL Program Guidelines

The REAL Program at Francis Marion University solicits proposals for funding for new and existing programs in experiential or nontraditional learning. Experiential learning opportunities occur outside the traditional classroom, library or laboratory. REAL program funds are only for **undergraduate** students.

- To be eligible for funds programs should include means for student reflection, discussion, analysis and evaluation of the learning experience.
- Application for REAL grants indicates a willingness to participate fully in assessment of the program.
- Future REAL grants may vary depending upon competing grants, funds availability and assessment of programs.

Best Practices in Experiential Learning:

Please keep in mind the following best practices considerations for nontraditional learning programs.

- Eligibility requirements clearly established in writing.
- Students file applications presenting evidence of eligibility.
- Faculty/department or school approve applicants.
- Worksites are designated.
- A faculty advisor is assigned to work with students.
- An external supervisor is identified at worksite.
- Orientation is conducted for students prior to the beginning of the activity.
- Faculty advisor meets regularly with students.
- Faculty advisor and worksite supervisor remain in contact with each other.
- Faculty advisor reports to the school/department the appropriateness of the worksite for future nontraditional learning activities.
- Outcomes are evaluated using methods such as:
    - pre-test/ post-test
    - pre-survey/post-survey
    - journals
    - portfolios
    - daily work logs
    - meetings with students
    - contacts with worksite supervisor

- o   student papers or presentations reflecting on the transformative nature of the nontraditional learning experience
- o   worksite supervisor provided evaluations of student's performance

Proposal Guidelines and Restrictions

1. REAL grants are open to academic programs only and one person should be identified as the principal investigator. Other involved faculty members should be listed on the proposal.
2. REAL grant proposals must be complete with itemized dollar amounts.
3. When requesting funds for hotels please specify the number of rooms, number of nights and estimated cost per night.
4. Grant recipients agree to have students complete a short, on-line rating form.
5. Grant recipients will also complete a fairly short on-line survey.
6. In most cases, preference will be given to projects that potentially will benefit the most people.
7. Faculty may apply for up to $5,000. Generally, the committee does not fund proposals over $5000; however, exceptional projects in excess of this amount will be considered subject to the availability of funding (some examples include projects that involve multiple faculty, are multidisciplinary or involve a large number of students). Strong rationale must be provided for proposals exceeding the limit.
8. Projects involving multiple faculty should be submitted as a single proposal.
9. REAL grants generally do not pay for meals or for mileage for personal vehicles when a university van would be cheaper. Faculty must comply with university travel policies. See the following link for information concerning university travel policies: https://www.fmarion.edu/accounting/employees/.
10. REAL grants involving student wages will generally pay $10.00 per hour.
11. International airfare **cannot** be covered.

Additional guidelines

1. The committee will not pay for teaching or modifying existing courses. A request for funds to create a new experiential learning activity will be considered but is a low priority.
2. The committee will approve stipends for research projects or internships only if the students are not receiving academic credit for the activity.
3. Payment for meals, when approved should follow state guidelines.
4. We do not fund multiyear grants. Future funding is not guaranteed but with progress reports and satisfactory evaluations support is likely.
5. Faculty cannot be paid a stipend for research related to a REAL Program grant.
6. Travel for faculty is a low priority item. Faculty travel will be considered if it involves accompanying students when that travel cannot be covered by Professional Development funds.

7. A faculty member wishing to take the same student to an additional REAL Program-funded activity must obtain a waiver by contacting the REAL Program coordinator.

Application Checklist:

- Did you seek Professional Development funds for yourself if applicable to this proposal?
- Did you define terms and acronyms that those outside of your department wouldn't know?
- Is your budget itemized (for example, costs for hotel rooms, number of rooms needed, number of people per room)?
- Did you double check your budget totals?
- Have you completed the chair approval form as well as the application?

Application Procedure:

Complete the application and submit your proposal on-line at https://www.fmarion.edu/provost/realgrants/. Send a hard copy of your approval form signed by your Dean or Chair to the REAL Program Coordinator: Dr. Jennifer Kelley, LSF 303F.