

# GUIDE TO FOUNDATION ACTIVITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

## FAQs

**What are Foundation Activity Grants and who funds them?** Foundation Activity Grants support the academic and creative projects of individual students, student teams and student-faculty teams. Activity Grants are awards of money from The Evergreen State College Foundation and are administered by the Academic Grants office. Charitable gifts to the Foundation support the grants, which are available winter and spring quarters.

### DEADLINES FOR PROPOSALS:

Winter quarter grants:  
**Friday, November 14, 2008, 5 p.m.**

Spring quarter grants:  
**Friday, February 20, 2009, 5 p.m.**

**What is the Foundation's goal for Activity Grants?** The Foundation's Board of Governors wants Activity Grants to enable students to complete exceptional academic or artistic projects that:

- Further the students' goals, knowledge and abilities.
- Have academic or artistic significance and a potential legacy to the field, the college, or the broader community.
- Demonstrate the applicants' commitment to Evergreen's teaching and learning values.
- Require financial support for completion.

**How much can I get for an Activity Grant, and what can I do with the money?** Each student may apply for up to \$1,000 for a quarter. Teams of students or student-faculty teams may apply for up to \$1,000 per student, for a maximum of \$3,000. Activity Grant projects are usually carried out in conjunction with academic programs or independent contracts and all projects must have at least one faculty sponsor. The program has supported theatrical productions, art projects and exhibitions, scientific research, video and film productions, student literary magazines, expenses for students to attend professional conferences and present their work, and other projects. By and large, Activity Grants are not designed to fund student equipment or software purchases (i.e., items that will continue to have significant "shelf life" after the end of the grant, such as computers, cameras, GIS instruments, etc.). Grant recipients should plan projects that will make use of equipment, software and instrumentation that the college already makes available for student use. An exception to this could include projects where an applicant proposes to *build* a piece of equipment as part of the project's learning outcomes.

**How competitive is the grant selection process?** Very. The Foundation can award about \$10,000 each winter and spring quarter, for a total of approximately \$20,000 per academic year. There are no summer or fall grants. In a typical year the college receives up to 100 applications and is able to award around 20.

**How are recipients selected?** A panel of faculty/staff experts reviews the proposals and makes a ranked list of funding recommendations. Staff in the Academic Grants office fund proposals in rank order. In the event of a tie, a committee of the Provost's staff makes final funding assignments.

**What am I required to do if I receive an Activity Grant?** You are required to complete the project as proposed, in consultation with your faculty sponsor. Funding is available by reimbursement only; the program does not offer funds in advance. Submit all receipts and an itemized request for reimbursement to the Office of Advancement, Sem 1 Annex and allow up to 30 days for payment. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted by the beginning of the next fall quarter after the award.

This document is available online at:

<http://www.evergreen.edu/sponsoredresearch/foundationactivitygrants.htm>.

## **Organization and Content of Your Proposal**

**General guidance.** Proposals must be typed. Choose Arial or Times New Roman font, no smaller than 12 point. Single spacing is acceptable, but nothing lower (i.e., .99 and below). The narrative and budget pages should have at least one-inch margins all around.

**Cover sheet.** The form is provided on the Foundation Activity Grant web site ([www.evergreen.edu/sponsoredresearch/foundationactivitygrants.htm](http://www.evergreen.edu/sponsoredresearch/foundationactivitygrants.htm)). Save the document to your hard drive and fill out completely. If you have trouble with the Word document, click on the tools menu and select the “Unprotect Document” option.

- Provide a title, the dates your project will be active, and the amount you are requesting.
- List the quarter for which you are applying; it is possible to apply one quarter in advance. For example, you may apply during the winter competition for a spring award.
- List all project participants and all faculty advisors to the project. **Be sure to designate one student as the project lead; the project lead will be the point person for all communications about the grant.** Faculty may be an active part of the project, but are not eligible for Activity Grant funding.
- Include your [evergreen.edu](http://www.evergreen.edu) e-mail address (check it frequently) and a phone number where you will be sure to get a message. E-mail will be the primary method by which we contact you.

**Narrative.** The two-page narrative should address four major areas:

1. **Describe your project clearly and succinctly.** State your hypothesis, research question or artistic intention, the steps you will take and methods you will use in your proposed work, and what outcome or end product you expect. The product could be a report or paper, a piece of art, a literary work, a performance, mastery of a new skill or knowledge base, etc. Be specific, but not overly detailed. **Provide a timeline specifying the key milestones for the project.**
2. **Explain how this project is important to your Evergreen career(s).** What past educational or other experiences make this project a next logical step for you? How have you demonstrated the knowledge and abilities to complete the project? How will the project challenge you? How does it fit with your future goals? Tell the story of your passion for this work — where it comes from and where you hope it will take you. Ask friends or faculty familiar with your work and interests to help you think this through.
3. **Discuss how you will embrace one or more of Evergreen’s teaching and learning values.** Foundation Activity Grants support student projects that embrace Evergreen’s core educational values: interdisciplinary study, collaborative learning, learning across significant differences, personal engagement, and linking theory with practical applications. If you’re unclear about these values, visit the college’s web site, “What we believe” (<http://www.evergreen.edu/aboutevergreen/fivefoci.htm>). Discuss them with a faculty member or student colleague. Don’t simply state *that* your project embraces one or more of these values. Explain *how* the project embraces these values, and more importantly, why these educational values are important or critical to its success.
4. **Explain the project’s significance.** What makes this project important beyond its direct impact for you? What meaningful future work will it help you prepare for? Will it bring beauty, knowledge, a new way of seeing to others? Will it expand knowledge in your field in a significant way? If the project is to have a legacy, what would it be and what will you do to bring it about?

## **Organization and Content of Your Proposal (continued)**

**Budget.** Only those proposals that present a budget with clearly justified expenses receive consideration. Be specific about and itemize the type of materials you need, the nature of your travel costs, or other expenses. Research costs to provide a realistic project budget. Ask for what you need, but make use of existing low- or no-cost options at the college or within the community. Do not simply ask for the maximum without justifying your request. And again, as a way to lower costs, use equipment that is already available to you. A budget for a photo field study of red foxes in the Capitol Forest, followed by a conference presentation, might look like this:

<b>Materials</b>	
<i>Photography paper – 100 sheets</i>	\$15.87
<i>Field books – 3 @ 8.95 apiece + tax</i>	\$29.11
<i>Photocopies for conference poster session – three 4' by 6' posters @ 12.07 apiece + tax (Kinko's)</i>	\$39.25
<i>1 set of ink cartridges for HP PhotoSmart printer (6 @ 14.99 + tax) (about 100 8½ x 11 prints)</i>	\$84.67
<b>Naturalist Society of the Western United States annual conference in Ojai, CA</b>	
<i>Roundtrip bus fare, Olympia to SeaTac</i>	\$17.00
<i>Roundtrip airfare, SeaTac to Santa Barbara (Alaska Airlines online quote)</i>	\$397.00
<i>Roundtrip airport shuttle to conference hotel</i>	\$64.00
<i>Conference Registration (student rate, includes meals)</i>	\$45.00
<i>Overnight accommodation (2 nights, March 13-14, Ojai Motel 6)</i>	122.46
<b>Total Request</b>	<b>\$814.36</b>

## **How to submit your proposal**

**E-mail submissions are preferred.** Send your electronic applications to [actgrant@evergreen.edu](mailto:actgrant@evergreen.edu). We will only accept **Word or PDF files for written documents; .jpeg files for pictures and illustrations; .mpeg, .wmv, and QuickTime files for movie/video samples.** You may also submit a hard copy of your application and/or any supporting documents (for accepted file formats, see above) in person or by mail to Dorothea Collins, Sem 2 D3105, Academic Grants office. No fancy covers please: a staple in the upper left hand corner is all that's required.

**Additional supporting materials** are not required, but you may submit slides, photographs, portfolio samples, etc. (see accepted file formats of electronic support material below) for additional consideration. If you submit anything you want back, indicate so with a note on the item itself. It's up to you to pick up those items within 2 weeks after grants have been announced. Items may be claimed from the Academic Grants office.

**Deadlines.** Proposals for winter quarter 2009 are due at 5 p.m. Friday, November 14, 2008; spring quarter 2009 proposals are due 5 p.m. Friday, February 14, 2009.

## **When will you hear back?**

**We will notify all applicants at the beginning of the quarter for which they applied.**

## Some Tips

**Stick to the designated format and organization:** 1 inch margins all around; 12 point or larger type; single spaced. Use an easy to read font like Arial or Times New. (Always adhere to a grant funding organization's required formats. Otherwise you risk disqualification, or almost as bad, the resentment of your reviewers.) Address the grant requirements in the order they are presented.

**Two pages isn't a lot.** Be pithy. Be concise. Avoid repeating yourself. Answer the questions completely and clearly, but don't say more than you need or get mired in unnecessary detail.

**Use plain English.** When writing, think of your readers as educated persons who are not knowledgeable in your field. Imagine explaining your project to someone at your high school reunion. Define unfamiliar terms. Use commonly understood words. Avoid jargon and tech-speak. For example, "anthropogenic environmental degradation" can become "environmental damage caused by humans," and your reader's brain won't suffer damage as a result. And though your art project will "employ visual, aural, and tactile modalities," your reviewer only cares that people will experience through sight, sound, and touch. Clarity counts, not big words.

**"I" is O.K.** Some grant applications may require that you write in the third person; this one doesn't. Don't be afraid of I, me, we, us. I find that the first person makes my writing stronger and more direct.

**Use the active voice.** Let your writing to be a crisp salad – not a pureed vegetable smoothie. Make the subjects of your sentences *actors*, not people or things being acted upon. Don't say this:

*Measurements of rainwater acidity will be taken at the study sites every three days. Data will be downloaded into a database application especially designed for this project. Faculty will be consulted throughout the project and standard research protocols will be followed.*

Instead, say this:

*I will measure the acidity of rainfall at the study sites every three days, and will compile the data in a database especially designed for this project. Throughout the study I will employ commonly-accepted research protocols for water quality analysis. My faculty agrees to consult with me throughout the quarter.*

**Good grant proposals tell a story.** This one should tell a story about you. Give it a beginning, middle, and end. In almost every good story, the main character changes, develops. You are the proposal's main character. Where do you come from, where do you plan to end up, and how will this grant help you along the way?

**Successful grants are not written alone.** Great writers have great editors. Write an early draft and let it season a bit. Rework it at least once, and then show it to others whom you can trust for honest, constructive feedback. If you know writing is a challenge for you, consult the Writing Center. Only complete your final draft after you've gotten good feedback from at least a couple other people.