



Magellan Scholar Grant Fall 2026 Application Guidelines

Magellan Scholar Grant Overview

The Magellan Scholar grant provides up to \$2500 to support USC faculty-mentored undergraduate research projects in all disciplines. The Magellan Scholar grant is a competitive, merit-based research grant for undergraduate students engaging in faculty-mentored undergraduate research in all disciplines. This grant program is designed to fund outstanding undergraduate research projects, as well as to provide students with an introduction to grant writing. The proposals are evaluated by an interdisciplinary faculty review committee.

Purpose

Through a competitive grant application process, the Magellan Scholar program provides an opportunity for students to learn how to write research grants and to secure funding for their undergraduate research projects.

Program Compliance, Research Integrity and Authorship

All participants are bound by the Responsible Conduct of Research code of ethics, the Carolinian Creed, and the University's Honor Code. Violations of these codes will result in an immediate decline or withdrawal of funding and referral to the appropriate office. Every student/student group is responsible for writing their own proposal, and mentors will provide guidance, suggestions, editing, and recommendations throughout the process.

Student Eligibility

- Full-time, degree-seeking USC undergraduate student (all campuses, all majors)
- In good standing with the university
- Must be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate for at least one semester after semester of application (cannot apply in same semester that student s graduating)
- Institutional GPA of at least 3.2 (GPA will be verified internally – do not submit transcripts)
- PharmD students are eligible if no bachelor's degree has been earned
- International students are eligible
- Students who previously received a Magellan Scholar grant are not eligible

Primary Mentor Eligibility

- Must be a USC faculty member (tenure-track/research/clinical) at any USC campus, including both medical schools
- USC professional track teaching faculty are eligible to serve as primary mentor provided that three conditions are met: 1) must possess a terminal degree, 2) a secondary mentor is required who must be tenure track faculty, and 3) the department chair must approve the submission.
- Mentors planning sabbaticals or extended leave during the Magellan Scholar project period must identify a secondary faculty mentor during this period to supervise the project
- Family members are not eligible to serve as primary or secondary mentors of applicants.
- Post-doctoral fellows may be eligible with department permission and a tenure track faculty member as secondary mentor.

Secondary Mentor Eligibility

- Graduate students
- Community professionals with content expertise

Number of Applications

- Students may only submit one application per round
- Faculty mentors may sponsor up to two students per round (2 individual student applications or one group proposal with a group of 2 students)

Funds Available and Project Period

- Applicants may request up to \$2,500 per student with a project period of 12 months.
- For fall submissions, the project period is January 1 – December 31.
For spring submission, the project period is May 1 – April 30.
- The project ends at the conclusion of the project period or when the student graduates – whichever is first.
- Extensions are not allowed.
- After the end of the project period or when the student graduates (whichever is first), any unused funds in excess of \$100 must be returned to the Office of Research.

Budget Information

The amount requested cannot exceed \$2500.

Applicants must use the Magellan Scholar budget/budget justification form found on the program webpage. Provide the project budget in the general categories listed on the form. In the budget justification section, provide a detailed explanation for how the funds will be used.

Allowable Costs

- Salary and fringe benefits for the undergraduate student applicant (\$15/h recommended)
- Materials and supplies needed to conduct the project
- Travel to conduct the project (may request up to \$2500)
- Travel to present proposed research at a conference (maximum allowed request is \$1000)
- University mandated travel insurance
- Computer software required to conduct the project
- Animal maintenance costs
- Program or training costs required for research completion
- Participant incentives – 1) must follow all university policies, 2) no incentives are allowed for participants outside of the US and 3) must include a letter from department business manager stating department approval and naming the custodian of the funds who has the required training

Unallowable Costs

- Compensation to anyone other than the undergraduate student applicant
- Retroactive payment for work completed prior to the start date
- Vaccination fees, passport fees, travel visas, etc.
- Computer/electronics hardware – includes tablets, cameras, etc.
- Incentives or payments to participants outside of the US
- Food or beverages (travel per diem is allowed)
- Expenses that occur prior to the grant start date, after the grant end date, or after the undergraduate student graduates.
- Tuition for any program
- Publication costs, including print, digital, thesis, etc.

Miscellaneous Information Regarding Funding and Expenses

Dual enrollment high school students who are also minors are subject to all policies related to travel in [ACAF 2.04](#).

Magellan Scholar awards are processed through “E” funds into “N” accounts.

- All expenditures MUST remain compliant with E/N fund procurement requirements.
- If awarded, business manager in primary mentor’s department/college/campus will be responsible for award management, including student hire, reimbursements, etc.
- Budgets should be monitored closely as overages are the responsibility of the mentor.

Although the committee intends to fund projects as close as possible to the requested amount, it reserves the right to alter the amount funded.

Please contact the OUR at our@sc.edu with any questions regarding allowable and unallowable expenses.

Group Projects

The maximum group size is two students. Both students must meet the minimum GPA requirement.

For group submissions:

- Submit one Applicant Information Form, which will require information about both students.
- One proposal is submitted within the standard two-page limit. Personal statements for each student may extend to a third page for group proposals.
- Roles of each student should be clearly described throughout the application.
- Each student submits a separate budget with a maximum of \$2500 each.
- Mentor submits one Mentoring Plan for the two students together and should include specific roles for each student as well as justification for the need for two students working on the project.

Research Abroad

- All travel covered by the Magellan Scholar program is subject to the approval and standard terms and conditions of the university and Education Abroad Office (or campus specific study abroad oversight).
- Should your travel be deemed non-compliant or unsafe for any reason, at any time (before or during stay), the Magellan Scholar program will follow the recommendations of the Education Abroad Office and has the right to deny and/or revoke funding.
- All Magellan Scholars traveling internationally are **required** to be protected by Emergency International Medical Insurance.
- All travel must be completed prior to graduation (this includes both research and conference travel).
- Columbia and Palmetto College campus students must complete the [Non-Credit Programs Application](#) with Education Abroad (see USC policy [ACAF 2.09](#)).

Human Subjects

USC is required by federal law to follow strict guidelines when human subjects are involved in research projects. The USC Institutional Review Board (IRB) provides flexibility in the level of review for student research projects. Faculty mentors should review the [USC Office of Research Compliance Student Research](#) webpage, oversee all training and activities to ensure ethical standards are followed. Contact the [Office of Research Compliance](#) with any questions.

Vertebrate Animals

Animal usage review and approval must be obtained by your faculty mentor prior to initiating any part of the project involving animals, and the student must have appropriate training. Magellan Scholar proposals may be submitted prior to approval by the Animal Care and Use Committee. All university and federal policies regarding the care and use of laboratory animals must be followed at all times, including required training.

- Include a statement within your project description/timeline that your mentor is submitting for Animal Care and Use Committee approval and you will comply with all rules, regulations, and training requirements.
- Projects involving animals must maintain compliance with all applicable regulations at all times or funding will be revoked.
- The faculty mentor is responsible for ensuring that the student is properly trained and follows all protocols.

Contact the [Department of Animal Resources](#) with any questions.

Formatting Guidelines

- 11 pt standard font
- Single spaced
- 0.5 inch margins
- Proposal narrative is limited to 2 pages, which includes background, research question, project description, project timeline and personal statement. (bibliography does not count towards 2 page limit)
- At top of first page, title is listed first, then on next line include student name, major and anticipated graduation date, then primary faculty mentor and mentor department.
- No appendices
- No hyperlinks
- All figures and tables must be included in the 2 page limit.

Proposal Narrative Preparation

Background and Significance

Briefly discuss the background and significance of the project and cite references from the literature. Explain why the project is important, Use language appropriate for a reviewer outside of your specific research area. State the research question(s) or hypothesis that the project will attempt to answer.

Project Description Design

Describe the project design, methodology and specific tasks, as well as anticipated outcomes. A timeline of activities must be included, presented as table or graphic format. The methods and activities should directly relate to the research question. Include a plan for how the work will be disseminated. This is the most important section of the proposal and should be the longest.

Personal Statement

Explain how this grant would enhance your experience as an undergraduate researcher and support your future career objectives. This section should be no more than ¼ of a page.

Proposal Submission Process - Student

Student applicants should assemble the following sections into a single Word or PDF file and share with their faculty mentor:

- Proposal narrative
- Budget

Students should then complete the online [Applicant Information Form](#), using the same title used in the proposal.

Proposal Submission Process - Faculty

The faculty mentor will then append the Primary Mentor Mentoring Plan (and Secondary Mentor Mentoring Plan if applicable) to the proposal. The faculty mentor submits the proposal in USCeRA prior to the deadline. See USCeRA Submission Instructions.

For your Magellan Scholar application submission to be considered on time and accepted for review, the mentor must submit the proposal with all required sections through USCeRA and the student must complete the Applicant Information Form prior to the stated deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Resubmissions

The review committee strongly encourages students to revise and resubmit proposals that are not funded the first time, if the project and timing permit. Applicants will use reviewer feedback from the earlier submission to guide the response.

- Revise the proposal to address the reviewer comments, as well as other updates needed (timeline, budget, etc.)
- Write a one-page (max) resubmission narrative that addresses the reviewer comments point by point. For each reviewer comment, explain how the proposal was revised to address the comments. At the top of the response page write “Magellan Scholar Resubmission Response”.
- After the one-page Magellan Scholar Resubmission Response, include the comments from the reviewers in the previous round.

Resubmissions that do not include the resubmission narrative and complete reviewer comments will not be reviewed.

Review Process

Applications from eligible students that are complete and responsive to these guidelines will be evaluated for merit by the faculty review committee. Review committee recommendations are forwarded to the Office of the Vice President for Research for final award decisions. Applicants and mentors will be notified via e-mail of award decisions. See webpage for announcement date.

A copy of the review rubric can be found on the Magellan Scholar webpage. The following criteria will be used to assess proposals:

- Overall merit
- Student's clarity of explanation
- Overall strength of collaboration form and mentor's role in project
- Student's readiness for project and/or the plan for gaining needed skills

Requirements for Magellan Scholar Grant Recipients

Review the [program requirements here](#) to understand expectations of grant recipients and their mentors, including how to use the funds.