

Name of Policy: <u>College of Medicine & Life Sciences: Research Bridge Funding</u>	 Revision date: October 11, 2019 Original Effective date: January 1, 2008
Policy Number: 3364-81-01-02-007	
Approving Officer: Dean, College of Medicine & Life Sciences	
Responsible Agent: <i>Dean, College of Medicine & Life Sciences; Senior Associate Dean for Administration and Finance</i>	
Scope: All University of Toledo Campuses	
<input type="checkbox"/> New policy proposal	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor/technical revision of existing policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Major revision of existing policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reaffirmation of existing policy

(A) Policy Statement

The College of Medicine will provide faculty members who have not received funding on a new or competitive renewal grant application after a period of demonstrated research productivity an opportunity to apply for temporary bridge funding to maintain a productive research laboratory while full support is sought from outside agencies.

(B) Purpose of Policy

Extramural funding for health/biomedical research has become exceptionally competitive in recent years and in some instances, the result is a lapse in funding for meritorious grant applications to NIH and other research sponsors. Investigators with a history of research productivity whose competitive renewals or new grants do not receive funding initially, but who are likely to successfully compete for new or renewed research funding in the near future with an amended application may apply for research bridge funding as outlined below.

(C) Procedure

Eligibility:

- (1) Any full-time faculty member, tenured and tenure track, who is the Principal Investigator (PI) on a project funded by a national agency with a bona fide scientific peer review (e.g. NIH, NSF, American Heart Association) for at least two consecutive years preceding the bridge funding request, and whose application for new or continued support from that or another funding agency has not been funded, will be eligible for bridge funding. Eligible faculty who have been the project PI for a component of a Program Project Grant are also eligible.
- (2) Bridge funding will only be provided for the continuity of a funded research program and is not intended to support pilot studies or programs that have not had recent funding. Grants

that are primarily for a demonstration project, a training program, or a postdoctoral fellowship are ineligible.

- (3) Applicants for bridge funding must have submitted an unsuccessful new or competitive renewal application during the last year of the extramural funding cycle and provide evidence that they are making substantial efforts to re-establish funding.
- (4) Applicants must show that they have lost, or will lose, a substantial portion of their peer reviewed extramural funding (>75%) within six months of the bridge funding application.
- (5) Only one request for bridge funding may be made for any given application that has been subjected to external peer review. If, subsequent to an unsuccessful request for bridge funding, a revised application is externally reviewed and review comments provided to the applicant, a second request for bridge funding may be made, as based on the revised application.

Bridge Funding Awards:

Bridge funding awards will be limited to \$50,000 and a maximum of one year or until the grantee re-establishes funding from other sources, whichever comes first. A separate request for “Core Cash” (up to \$15,000) may be made through the PI’s department chair, if core lab services are required for continuation of the applicant’s project. In the event that the PI’s extramural grant is funded during the period of bridge support, unexpended funds in proportion to the time remaining in the bridge award period will be returned to the College of Medicine and Life Sciences.

Awards may be used to support supplies, small equipment, lab personnel (excluding graduate students), and animal care. Bridge funding may not be used to support salaries and benefits of tenured and tenure track faculty members, travel to scientific conferences, graduate student stipends, administrative costs (e.g. department surcharges for service contracts) and budget deficits.

Awarded funds must be spent according to the budget provided by the investigator. Use of funds for other activities will result in cessation of the award.

Application Process:

Applications for bridge funding must be in the form of a single pdf file containing the following items:

- (1) A cover letter clearly stating the basis for the request and the ways in which the PI has met the criteria for eligibility.
- (2) A brief (2-3 page) summary of the research for which bridge funding is requested. This should not contain extensive experimental detail. Rather, it should describe: (a) the specific aims; (b) the significance of the work; and (c) why bridge funding is necessary.

- (3) A simple list of the PI's active grants and grant applications (even if not funded) for the last five years. If a statement of award from the funding agency is available, please supply a copy. The list should include any pending applications. Provide an abstract for each project listed.
- (4) A full copy of the most recent new or competing renewal application that was submitted to the extramural sponsor.
- (5) A copy of any Summary Statements (critiques) for the most recent grant submission, including priority/percentile scores if available. If unclear, explain the chronology of any prior submissions, and provide any relevant correspondence from the sponsor regarding their decision not to fund the most recent renewal application.
- (6) A concise and realistic point-by point list (2-page limit) of the specific studies that will be done with the bridge funds, explaining how they will address the concerns raised in the prior review and strengthen the intended resubmission. Include a projected date for resubmission.
- (7) A budget page detailing how bridge funds will be utilized.
- (8) A NIH-style biographical sketch for the PI and any co-PI's.
- (9) A letter of support from the applicant's Department Chair that includes: (a) an assessment of the likelihood of future funding; (b) a candid assessment of the options for continuation of the research in the event extramural funding is not obtained; (c) evidence that the department is contributing to the continuance of research operations in an appropriate manner (e.g., graduate student support, access to essential equipment, allocation of sufficient lab space), and 4) a description of any mentoring efforts to help the PI improve the grant application. Where appropriate, Center Directors may also submit letters of support.

Deadlines for bridge funding applications will be announced periodically throughout the academic year, based on availability of funds. Eligible applications for bridge funding should be directed to the College of Medicine and Life Sciences Dean's Office in accordance with the instructions in the announcement

Bridge fund awards will be transferred to the PI. 's account upon verification that additional external funding has not yet been secured.

Review Process:

Application containing all required elements will be reviewed by the COMLS Research Advisory Council (RAC). For each application, the RAC will endeavor to obtain two independent internal evaluations from senior faculty members who have a prior history of NIH funding and/or service on extramural grant review panels. Efforts will be made to select reviewers who are not from the same department as the applicant and who have no ongoing collaborations or known conflicts of

interest. Reviewers need not be content experts, but should be able to assess the responsiveness of the application to the specific criteria for bridge funding; (1) past productivity of the PI, (2) financial need to ensure the viability of a productive research program, (3) effectiveness in addressing concerns expressed in prior reviews, and (4) potential to enhance the chances of obtaining external funding within a reasonable time. The internal reviews will be considered by the RAC along with the other application materials. The RAC will rank the applications and make funding recommendations to the Dean. The final number of awards and dollar amount will depend on the availability of funds and are made at the discretion of the Dean of the College of Medicine and Life Sciences. Depending on the number of applications received and the size of the bridge funding pool, it is possible that some meritorious applications will not receive funding. In such cases the unfunded applications may be forwarded to the next cycle.

Outcome Report:

At the end of the term of bridge funding, recipients will be required to submit an outcome report to the Dean's office. The outcome report must include; (1) a summary of the research supported by the bridge funds, (2) a copy of any new or revised grant application based on work done during the term of the award, (3) a list of expenditures, and (4) a summary statement and funding decision from the extramural sponsor, when these become available.

<p>Approved by:</p> <p><u>/s/</u> Christopher J. Cooper, M.D. Executive Vice President for Clinical Affairs and Dean for the College of Medicine and Life Sciences</p> <p><u>October 11, 2019</u> Date</p> <p><i>Review/Revision Completed by:</i></p> <p><i>Senior Associate Dean for Administration & Finance Chair, Research Advisory Council, SLT</i></p>	<p>Policies Superseded by This Policy: None</p> <p>Initial effective date: January 1, 2008</p> <p>Review/Revision Date: 11/01/2016, 8/30/2019 (review), 10/11/2019</p> <p>Next review date: October 11, 2022 (three years from most recent revision/review date)</p>
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