

**SPARC Research Grant Proposal Evaluation Rubric**
**Version date 9/3/2025**

Criteria	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement
<b>Justification of Scholarly Significance</b>	Presents a compelling, well-substantiated rationale of the proposed work's importance in the field, grounded in disciplinary context; clearly articulates a gap or problem.	Provides a strong, clear justification with good disciplinary grounding and relevance to the field.	Presents a reasonable argument; may lack depth or specificity.	Justification underdeveloped or general; lacks specific relevance.	Justification is weak, unclear, or missing; fails to demonstrate relevance to the field.
<b>Clarity of Research Question, Hypothesis, or Problem Statement including the Aims, Goals, and/or Objectives for this work</b>	Clear, specific, logically structured, and tightly aligned with the overall project rationale.	Clearly stated and well aligned with project rationale; may have minor ambiguities.	Stated in general terms but may lack clarity, specificity, or logical alignment with project rationale.	Vague, overly broad, or does not clearly define project rationale.	Unclear, unrealistic, or absent.
<b>Appropriateness of Plan of Work (PoW) or Methods for proposed project</b>	PoW/Methods demonstrate disciplinary rigor; thoroughly appropriate and well-aligned with the proposed project.	PoW/Methods are appropriate and aligned, though some details may be lacking.	PoW/Methods are generally suitable; some aspects may be underdeveloped, misaligned, or not fully justified.	PoW/Methods are minimally described, lack depth, or weakly connected to proposed project.	PoW/Methods are inappropriate, poorly defined, or missing.
<b>Feasibility of Scope of Work Within Time Period</b>	The scope of work is well-defined and appears realistically achievable within the proposed timeframe; clearly demonstrates realistic planning.	Scope appears feasible and well considered in relation to the timeframe, with only minor concerns.	Scope seems reasonable but may require adjustments to fit within the proposed timeframe.	Scope seems overly ambitious for timeline or vague; does not provide sufficient evidence the work can be completed within the timeframe.	Scope appears unrealistic within the proposed timeframe, with significant concerns about feasibility.
<b>Dissemination Plan Beyond DiscoverUSC</b>	Clearly articulates how the project will lead to significant dissemination beyond USC; Provides specific and appropriate venues, publications, or audiences.	Provides a clear plan to disseminate work beyond the institution with suitable venues.	Discusses dissemination in general terms; outlets or audiences are only loosely described; lacks specificity or depth.	Minimal justification for dissemination; plan provides few specifics, vague, and/or poorly developed.	Lacks a dissemination plan or rationale; fails to articulate potential public engagement.
<b>Advancement of Graduate Education</b>	Clearly and convincingly shows how the project is a critical step in academic and professional development.	Makes a strong case for how the work supports the student's academic progress.	Provides a reasonable link between the project and the student's academic path.	Offers minimal discussion of academic relevance to the student's graduate career.	Fails to articulate how the work advances the student's academic or professional goals.
<b>Clarity and Accessibility of Writing</b> <i>(Please provide specific guidance for improvement in comments below)</i>	Writing is exceptionally clear, well-organized, focused, accessible, and engaging for readers across disciplines.	Writing is clear, generally well-organized, and mostly accessible with occasional jargon, complexity, or vagueness.	Writing is generally understandable with moderate areas of improvement needed; such as jargon-use, complexity, or vagueness.	Writing overall is somewhat unclear or difficult to follow; may include significant jargon-use, complexity, or vagueness.	Writing is unclear, disorganized, or inaccessible to non-specialists.