



Division of
**Research, Innovation and
Economic Development**

TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

President's Excellence in Research Scholars (PERS) 2024

Overview:

The President's Excellence in Research Scholars initiative seeks to provide internal seed-grant funding for faculty-led student research which will provide innovative learning experiences through research, technology, and other resources. PERS is administered by the Division of Research, Innovation, and Economic Development (RIED) through a competitive review process, under the advisement of the university's Research Council, and final approval of the Vice President for RIED. The awardees are expected to seek external seed funding opportunities based on the results of their internal grant(s), as appropriate for their disciplines.

Goals:

- Engage students in research to enhance their experiential learning experience under guidance of Tarleton Faculty/Research Staff
- Support meritorious research
- Strengthen the research environment of Tarleton
- Generate data for external funding

Project Eligibility: This opportunity is open to full-time Faculty/Research Staff in all disciplines at Tarleton campuses. Only one lead principal investigator (PI) is allowed on proposals. An applicant may submit only one proposal as the lead PI and another as Co-PI. Students must be current full-time enrolled students (undergraduate and graduate) in the previous and upcoming semesters.

Project Duration: May 1 – August 17, 2024

Please note:

- Faculty PERS hire dates will be 6/1 – 8/31
- May 1st early start is approved specifically to begin ordering needed supplies to start research projects timely
- If students are hired during this early start date in May, please follow guidelines listed below in "Label Student Employee Section"
- Students may be hired beginning May 1st (for current student employees) or as processed in accordance to People & Culture's timeline for hiring but will need to follow guidelines below in regards to max work hours.

Project Student Funding:

Undergraduate: \$16/hour based on 20 hours /week max for the duration of the project.

Graduate: \$21/hour based on 20 hours /week max for the duration of the project.

Please note: Students may work less hours, but not more than 20 hours per week in accordance the [Student Employment Guidelines](#).

- Students hired for PERS projects, with no current Tarleton student employment status, are required to attend New Student Orientation. Two orientations are scheduled every Friday. The student ***must complete*** necessary onboarding tasks, such as a background check, federal I9, and Workday processes, to be cleared for orientation and subsequently start in their position. The hire process for student workers is outlined in the People & Culture, [Student Employees](#) website. Departments must indicate the student's classification (i.e., undergraduate or graduate) in order to receive the correct hourly rate.
- If a student is currently employed in a student position, it is imperative they speak with their current supervisor to advise of the transfer to the PERS role and arrange future employment status as available and approved once their PERS role concludes. Although they will be transferring student employment positions, the process to hire them for a PERS position is the same as outlined in the People & Culture, [Student Employees](#) website. Students holding a PERS position in conjunction with another student position may not exceed a combined 20 hours/week.
- People & Culture will create PERS student worker positions using the Student Worker Special U7762 job profile in Workday; departments will not need to create the positions.
- Departments are required to submit a request to hire a student employee via the [Student and GA Initiate to Hire Smartsheet](#) (as outlined in the [Student Employees](#) website) in order for People & Culture process the hire request and move the student employee into a PERS position.
- Once the hire is complete in Workday, the position and new student worker will be moved to the respective supervisor for employment monitoring and approval of hours worked.
- PERS positions employment may begin on or after May 1, 2024 and will end on August 17, 2024. People & Culture will process the terminations. All work hours will need to be submitted by August 17, 2024.

Project Faculty/Research Staff Funding:

Maximum 3 hr. release time for the 3-month summer session- One faculty is eligible to mentor up to 3 students, however two faculty are not eligible to mentor one (the same) student. *Please note: PERS funding may not be combined with summer salary and/or other Tarleton stipends to exceed 100% of a faculty member's eligible summer salary amount. If you need clarification of your eligibility, please contact your departments Budget Specialist.

Project Supplies and Travel:

A reasonable supplies and travel (if applicable) budget may be requested. If ordering/purchasing supplies on budget, please do quick research of the source where supplies will be purchased to verify the delivery of supplies will be on time for project.

No Equipment purchase will be allowed.

No additional funds will be made available once initial awards are distributed. Funds cannot be expended beyond the August 17, 2024 deadline. Make sure P-cards are approved and paid by August 17, 2024.

Project Focus: projects must be future-oriented; using modern tools and techniques to research a particular topic in the applicant's discipline or multi-collaborative around a particular research topic. Funds will not be awarded for research/scholarship projects already completed or for MS thesis.

Project Categories (must check only ONE):

- Transdisciplinary research interest groups (TRIG):** Forming transdisciplinary teams to conceive and catalyze innovative ideas to address scientific and societal challenges. Overall goal is to support high impact research, stimulate new cross disciplinary collaborations (Group of at least 3 faculty from different colleges/centers and at least 3 students from different colleges/centers), and establish credibility in a new research area that will attract funding from the state and federal government, industry, or foundations. If you have received funding in this category, attach results from prior support.
- New Investigator Research Development (NeRD):** Internal funding mechanism designed to provide research support to establish the research portfolio of Assistant professors that have not received PERS funding in the past 24+ months. Application should be in collaboration with an Associate or Full Professor, who has received extramural funding.
- Advanced Projects:** to support projects that have received prior PERS funding and extramural funding. Successful proposals will include rationale for support, including how this funding will lead to large extramural awards (>500k).

Sample of broad topics for consideration:

Advancing the Data Revolution: cybersecurity, big data, and use of artificial intelligence in different disciplines

Safe, Connected, and Resilient Communities: rural broadband access, strengthening infrastructure, crime prevention and safety.

Politics, History and Culture: migration, immigration, Texas history, art and literature

Health Disparities: health literacy, access to health care, emotional and physical well-being, food deserts and food security, food safety, childhood obesity

STEM Education and Workforce Development: retention, graduation, diversity, inclusion and student success.

Bioeconomy: Smart farms, water safety, microbiomes, biotechnology, drug development and drug delivery, supply chain and logistics

Biomedical research related topics

Innovating for a Resilient and Sustainable Future: environmental sustainability, science-based inquiry into a broad range of environmental issues

Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development: market research, workforce development, rural urban interdependence, rural entrepreneurship, business incubators.

Application Process: Application should include clear goals and objectives, research plan, and methodology.

Applications must include:

1. **A complete and signed proposal coversheet**
2. **A complete and signed budget worksheet with budget justification (1 page description of each category requested in the budget template)**
3. **A complete proposal. The proposal must conform to the following elements:**
 - **A descriptive project title and a list of 5 Keywords that describe the research**
 - **Abstract (project summary):** In 300 words or less describe the project and the potential impact for a general audience.
 - **Project description:** limit to 3 pages description of the proposed project including:
 - a. **Rationale:** explain goal(s), current state in the field of study, and a description of the novel contribution to the discipline/community that your work will attempt to produce.
 - b. **Research plan/methodology:** a description of the activities and what you will accomplish. Faculty will also provide a brief description of their expertise in the proposed research
 - c. **Justification:** how funds will foster collaborations, secure external funding, and enhance the student learning experience.
 - d. **Research Compliance:** If the proposal involves research protocols that require approval from an institution review committee such as animal care, human subjects, hazardous materials, and others, PIs must indicate so by checking the appropriate box(es) under Question 9 on the proposal coversheet.

4. **Dean and Budget Specialist Review:** Before submitting application, the appropriate department Dean and Budget Specialist will need to review and sign off on budget form.
5. **Future research plans:** list federal and other solicitations to which faculty plans to submit an application by February 1, 2025.

Application Deadline and Submission:

Applications for FY 24 will be accepted on a rolling basis until **March 22, 2024**. **No late applications will be accepted.**

Applications should be submitted via email as a **single PDF file** to research@tarleton.edu. Please name the file using the following format: "Lastname_Firstname_2024 PERS Application"

Applications are encouraged to submit all proposal components before March 22, 2024 for preliminary review by RIED staff. RIED staff will notify applicants of missing components in time for corrections to be made by the applicant before the due date.

Application Review Process:

RIED staff will review submitted applications for compliance with the eligibility requirements and application instructions. Eligible applications will be forwarded to the Review Panel that is made up of Research Council members and reviewed using the review criteria listed below. Applications will be scored as described below in the Review Criteria section. Special consideration will be given to applications that 1) Enhance the quality of students' educational experience through research using modern tools and technology 2) Generate new data for sponsored research.

Review Criteria for Proposals:

1. Rational/Justification
2. Research Plan/ Methodology
3. Extramural Competitiveness
4. Potential to Advance Field

Review Panel Recommendations:

Once the review of proposals is complete, one of the following recommendations will be made by the review panel for each proposal.

- Fund as submitted (with full or revised budget): This may result in a proposal being funded as is for the full amount requested. However, RIED may suggest a revised budget to better reflect the proposed activities and reviewers' evaluation.
- Fund if possible: The proposal is deemed worthy of funding by the review panel but not ranked as highly as the proposals in the previous category. Such proposals may be funded if the budget allows. PIs whose proposals fall in this category are encourage to resubmit a revised proposal during the next cycle of funding.
- Do not fund: The proposal has significant weaknesses and drawbacks.

The Review Panel will forward its recommendation to the Vice President of RIED and they will make the final selections.

Awardee Responsibilities and Expected Deliverables include:

- Identification of student(s) working on the project. Student(s) must be approved by RIED and faculty must notify RIED immediately for requesting student changes.
- Awardees may start their projects on June 1, 2024. The May 1st start date is to begin ordering supplies for the PERS project.
- Regardless of the start date, PIs and Co-PIs must expend the funds by August 17, 2024 to ensure proper closeout of the awards by the end of the fiscal year. Awarded funds not expended by August 17, 2024 will be transferred out of the project budget and revert to the institution.
- Submit a mid-summer Progress Report by June 30th addressing project progress and any issues encountered, and budget update
- Submit a Final Progress Report. If for any reason, the project is not completed by August 17th, faculty will continue to be responsible for monthly progress reports until completion.
- Faculty to submit, as a Principal Investigator, a proposal to an external funding source by February 1, 2025.
- Acknowledge Tarleton State University's PERS program on any publications/presentations as a result of this funding.
- Faculty and Student(s) must present a poster at the Research Symposium to be held at Tarleton- Stephenville in February 2025. If the student graduates, the faculty member is still required to present a poster.