Graduate Research and Creative Activity (GRACA) Application Guidelines
Offered by the Office of Research and Creative Activity (ORCA)
Applications accepted beginning September 16, 2024, and January 6, 2025

The GRACA program provides support for faculty-mentored **graduate student research and creative activity**. The program is open to all currently enrolled graduate students who pay student fees to UNO. The program offers up to $5,000 per student.
Applications will be considered until funding allotted for the semester runs out OR until there is insufficient time to complete compliance and contract requirements. Students whose projects will require IRB approval are encouraged to apply during the Fall semester to allow sufficient time to complete the approval process.

Program Requirements
Students must:

- Be currently enrolled and paying fees at UNO through Summer semester (August) 2024 OR
- Be currently enrolled and graduating in Spring 2024. **Spring 2024 graduates may only be awarded if they apply by December 6, 2024 and can submit all compliance approvals (IRB, IBC, or IACUC) and paperwork by January 13, 2025.**
- Identify an appropriate faculty mentor
- Propose a meritorious scholarly experience in conjunction with the mentor
- Present at the UNO Research and Creative Activity Fair in Spring 2026. Graduating students will be given the option to present at the 2025 Fair on April 11, 2025 or write a final report in lieu of presentation at the 2026 Fair.

Mentors must submit a letter of mentor support, providing:
- An analysis of viability of the project objectives and methodology
- Verification of proposed budget needs and costs
- Description of the mentor support to be provided
- Description of the student's background and preparation for the project

NOTE: Mentors must be members of UNO Graduate Faculty. Faculty may be listed as a mentor on as many projects as they have capacity for, though we encourage a 3 (three) graduate student limit to give mentees the best experience. Mentors receive a $500 per FUSE and/or GRACA student mentor award (up to $1000) to support their own line of academic research or creative activity.

Mentors working with students whose projects **involve human subjects or data** should also be prepared to guide the student through the IRB approval or waiver process and assist the student in answering additional questions in the application regarding human subjects.

A Note to Potential Mentors:

GRACA provides an ideal opportunity for faculty to extend their research into new areas including, for instance, pedagogical scholarship or scholarship of teaching and learning. If you would like to discuss how you might develop a FUSE/GRACA project based on your community engagement activities, service

learning, teaching field experiences, or other scholarly service or teaching activities, please contact us at unoorca@unomaha.edu.

Compliance Requirements
Student projects that require compliance approval (projects involving human subjects, vertebrate animals, or biohazardous materials) must have IRB, IACUC, and/or IBC approval before funds are released.
The title of the IACUC/IRB/IBC protocol must be identical to the GRACA proposal title. Students' names must be listed on the protocol. *Compliance approvals must be received by 11:59PM on May 1, 2025 for students graduating in Fall 2024 or later, OR by 11:59PM on January 13, 2025 for students graduating in Spring 2025. Failure to obtain compliance approval by this date will result in forfeit of award.*

==A note to potential mentors of students working with human subjects or data, vertebrae animals, and/or biohazards:== The updated FUSE and GRACA applications in NuRamp have more detailed questions regarding compliance than in past years. It is STRONGLY recommended that mentors assist the student in filling out the form in NuRamp before it is routed for signatures.

What does GRACA fund?
-GRACA funds a faculty-mentored scholarly research or creative activity experience. This may include, but is not limited to: research, data collection, instrument development, data management/analysis, or development of a scholarly/creative activity product (e.g., publication, artistic expression, artistic performance, or exhibit)
-Funds may be requested for a **stipend of up to $5,000,** project-related materials and supplies, operating expenses, and/or travel for data/information collection. Stipends do not require an itemized budget. **Funds may be used for one or multiple categories and should be detailed in the budget justification**.
-Thesis-related studies are allowable, but GRACA will not fund the writing of a thesis manuscript.
A note about timelines:
The GRACA program is intended to fund projects taking place in May, June, July, and/or August 2025. Your timeline may include activities before or after these months, but at least 50% of your project should occur during the Summer to qualify for funding. For students graduating in Spring 2025, all activities must occur in February, March, April, and/or May 2025.

What is NOT funded by GRACA?
-GRACA **does not fund retroactively**, nor does it fund completed projects.
-Funds cannot be used for **publication charges, salary/release time for faculty, indirect costs, or the hiring of student or other workers**.
-GRACA **does not fund activities for which students are receiving academic credit** (e.g. study abroad, independent study courses).
- **Travel funding is only available for project activities**. GRACA **does not** fund travel to present at or attend conferences. Graduate students may request funding from the University Committee on Research and Creative Activity (UCRCA) for this purpose.
Please note: PhD students may receive a maximum of two (2) GRACA awards and Masters students may receive a maximum of one (1) award.

Proposal Content

Students are expected to write their own GRACA proposals with input from their faculty mentor. Adhering to UNO's policy towards plagiarism, GRACA proposals will be screened for original work. Proposals not meeting submission guidelines or poorly written proposals may be rejected without review. Students are advised to allow plenty of time for preparation of proposal materials. Applicants are advised to use University resources, including the [UNO Writing Center](). Proposals should describe the scholarly project, the product of the proposed work, its contribution to the field or conceptual importance. While it is expected that students develop an independent project, activity, or research question, the program also expects proposed activities to be related to the broader umbrella of the faculty mentor's scholarly activities and contribute to the professional development of faculty mentors.

 If you have received previous FUSE or GRACA funding, please provide the title of your previous project, the results of your research or creative activity, and an explanation of how your new proposal differs from your previous project.

Proposal Format

The following information must be written by the student and submitted as a single PDF document *together with the faculty mentor letter of support*, entitled with the student's surname (GRACA2024_student surname.pdf):

1. **Title of Project**
2. **Project Description (3 page maximum, single spaced, 11 pt font minimum**)
   This section should include:
   a. Description of Project;
   b. Activities, Process, or Methodology: A description of the activities or process to be undertaken. Describe how they will result in project completion. If appropriate to the discipline, include a research methodology along with justification;
   c. Project Timeline: Illustrate a schedule of activities with at least 50% occurring May-August 2025 (or February-May 2025 for Spring 2025 graduates);
   d. Student/Faculty Mentor Roles: A description of the roles of the student and faculty mentor in the project. This is separate from the faculty letter of mentor support;
   e. A list of previous internal funding received (FUSE, GRACA, and/or UCRCA), with a description of how this project builds on or differs from previously funded projects. Provide outcomes.
3. **Budget and Budget Justification** (**1 page maximum**)
   a. The stipend and anticipated travel, materials, and operating expenditures should be listed and well justified. If the budget is for materials/supplies only, please provide a reason why no stipend is requested.
      i. Students requesting funding for international travel must include the $50 Education Abroad Office administration cost in their budget.
   b. If travel is required, the rationale for travel funding should be described here. All airline travel must be booked through [Fox World Travel](). Please consult the University policies on travel to foreign countries - restrictions may apply.

      i. Students requesting funding for international travel are advised to contact Yue Song (yuesong@unomaha.edu) to discuss their plans before submitting a FUSE application.

     ii. Students requesting mileage reimbursement or a per diem should use the University approved mileage rate and the GSA Per Diem Rates for their domestic destination.

Redistribution of funds between the stipend and materials/supplies/travel/operating costs is not permitted after GRACA funding is awarded. Re-budgeting within materials, supplies, travel, and operating costs is allowable with justification.

4. **References and/or Citations (no page limit)**
5. **Letter of Mentor Support** (**1 page maximum, single-spaced, 11 pt font minimum**)
   The letter must address the program requirements listed in the RFP. If the GRACA project is a part of the mentor's research or creative activity program, the mentor letter should explain how the proposed project fits into this program but has distinct outcomes and/or activities. for the student applicant (e.g., data collection; survey/questionnaire development; conducting interviews; managing/analyzing data, etc.). The letter should also indicate the mentor's commitment to overseeing the project, specifying means to measure progress and frequency of anticipated meetings.

NOTE: THE LETTER OF MENTOR SUPPORT IS TO BE GIVEN TO THE STUDENT AND INCLUDED IN THE STUDENT'S SINGLE PDF SUBMISSION DOCUMENT.

The application portal in NuRamp will open on September 16, 2024.

Submission Instructions
Visit the online application site (NuRamp): https://nuramp.nebraska.edu/, where students will submit their applications and upload their proposals.

The following steps will help students and mentors navigate the application site:

Under **Main Menu** tab, find "**Internal Competitions**"
Click on "**Proposals and Awards**"
Click on "**Create New Application**"
Select "**GRACA 2024/2025**" from the drop-down list of competitions
Begin entering application information

Upon their receiving notification of the student's submission, it is recommended faculty mentors immediately complete the NuRamp signature routing process. A proposal is not considered for funding until all routing has completed.

Program Process
Proposals will be accepted beginning each semester and reviewed on an ongoing basis by designated program faculty and staff, to ensure fulfillment of all program requirements. Those not meeting program requirements will be returned to the student/faculty mentor pair for the opportunity to revise and resubmit the proposals. Funding decisions will generally be disseminated within 30 working days of submission but may take longer depending on the number of proposals being reviewed. **Proposals will be accepted as long as funds are available and there is sufficient time to obtain compliance approval.**

Compliance Approvals
If the proposed project involves any form of work with human subjects or their personal data (including interviews), vertebrate animals, and/or biohazardous materials, the student and mentor must obtain either approval or a waiver from the IRB (human subjects), IACUC (vertebrate animals), and/or IBC (biohazards). If you are unsure whether or not this applies to the proposed project, visit one of the following websites to confirm:

1. IRB for those working with human subjects or their personal data. Be sure to complete the "Does My Project Require IRB Review?" questionnaire, even if you don't think your project will need it.
2. IACUC for those working with live vertebrate animals.
3. IBC for those working with biohazardous materials.

Release of Funds
Release of stipend funds in four equal payments will only occur May – August 2025 OR February – May 2025 (Spring 2025 graduates only). Funds for materials and supplies or travel may be available sooner, but are not guaranteed before May 31, 2025 or February 1, 2025 (Spring 2025 graduates only). *Funds will not be released until a contract has been signed by both the student and faculty mentor, the student has viewed the orientation webinar, completed the quiz, and all compliance approvals are received in the unoorca@unomaha.edu email inbox by May 1, 2025 or January 13, 2025 (graduating students only).*

NOTE: **GRACA *stipend distribution*** may impact your current and/or future financial aid awards. Per Federal rules, this type of funding must be counted as 'Estimated Financial Assistance' when calculating financial aid eligibility. If you have specific questions about the impact on your financial aid, please contact the Office of Financial Support & Scholarships. Graduating students who have their stipends released February-May are likely to have their financial aid impacted. **We recommend all applicants interested in the program consult Jean Phillips (jphillips@unomaha.edu) in the Office of Financial Support & Scholarships BEFORE applying for GRACA.**

Funds for materials, supplies, and travel must be utilized by December 15, 2025. Items purchased with GRACA funds are the property of the University (this does not include items purchased with stipend funds).

Questions
Please direct questions to the Office of Research and Creative Activity, unoorca@unomaha.edu.
Do not submit proposals to this email address; any so submitted will not be considered for review.