



Challenge Grants at De La Salle University

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation

Nature of Challenge Grants

Challenge grants, unlike open calls for research proposals, are designed to promote research along thematic lines that are aligned with the strategic research thrusts of the University. Proposals are sought that would affirm the University's support for research that secure positive, meaningful, lasting, and inclusive growth in society and contribute to nation-building by seeking to:

1. alleviate poverty;
2. promote peace and social justice;
3. protect the welfare of women, youth at risk, and other vulnerable sectors of society;
4. create wealth and resources to bridge the various societal divides;
5. provide models and avenues for stewardship of God's creation; and
6. influence policy, governance, and the management of institutions.

For challenge grants, the target sector, community or beneficiary of the project must be very clear, even if the direct output of the project may not be immediately useful nor transferable to the sector, community, or beneficiary concerned.

Purpose of Challenge Grants

The purpose of challenge grants is to jump-start research activities in strategic research areas by encouraging researchers in the academic community to collaborate on common projects, even if they do not come from the same department or College. These collaborative projects are meant to increase the chances for DLSU researchers of getting larger external funding for high-impact research, and to enhance prospects for publication of findings in high-quality journals and conference proceedings. Alternatively, impact may also be demonstrated through the development of patentable outputs.

Strategic Research Areas

In identifying **strategic research** areas, referred to as *research themes*, the University seeks to strategically build on the existing strengths of its research community, seize opportunities to define the University's research culture, and develop resources to support deeper and broader research initiatives in the long-run.

Guided by its Lasallian tradition and the University's mission, the University chooses to allocate resources for the period 2011-2021 in promoting high-impact strategic research activities under the following research themes.

1. Food, Nutrition and Health (*e.g. biochemistry of food products, science and engineering of potable water, cancer risks and cure from food, sensory labs, economic impact studies of nutrition programs in schools*)
2. Sustainability, the Environment, and Energy (*e.g. climate change, eco-design of houses and urban centers, industrial ecology, nano-carbon tubes, solar-powered tricycles and sheds*)
3. Women, Children and Family (*e.g. studies on gender, OFW families, micro-finance, laws for the protection of human rights, impact of globalization on the average Filipino family*)
4. Living Culture and Contemporary Societies (*e.g. history, digital art, languages, comparative literature, human-computer interfaces, study of social networks on the Web, impact of globalization on the mobility of students and workers*)
5. Learners and Learning Innovations (*e.g. impact studies on K to 12, ICT-based learning, transformative learning, software and gadgets for learning, assessment of the public school system*)

Continued Support for Independent Research in the Academic Disciplines

The University, through the University Research Coordination Office, will continue to support research in all academic disciplines. As such, professors and researchers may continue to prefer to work independently on topics of their own choice, liking, and expertise.

The University, however, would encourage faculty members to seek out research collaborators on campus and to work in clusters as professional learning communities (PLC). These PLCs can cross disciplinary boundaries by involving faculty members coming from different departments and colleges.

Implementing Guidelines for Challenge Grants

DLSU provides some freedom and flexibility to Principal Investigators so they can determine for themselves the best manner by which the budget is to be allocated in order to achieve the research objectives - and most especially, in order for the impact of the study/research to be most felt by the sector or community that is targeted by the project.

Nevertheless, there are some general guidelines that Principal Investigators may use to assist them in preparing their proposal, including the proposed Line-Item Budget:

1. The grant is normally intended for collaborative projects, involving three or more full-time faculty members, although part-time faculty members, graduate

students, researchers and other members of the University research community may also participate as co-proponents.

2. Each grant has to have a Principal Investigator who will be accountable for the entire project. The Principal Investigator must be a full-time Faculty Member with permanent status.
3. The grant is for a minimum of Php500,000 and a maximum budget of Php1Million. Preference is given to full-blown projects (as opposed to small exploratory studies) that can justify the full use of the 500 Thousand to 1Million funding range.
4. The grant may be used to pay for research assistants and other research-related personnel. URCO has the updated University rates for research assistants of different levels of qualification, which can be used as a guide.
5. Normally, the grant is not intended to be used to pay for any honorarium for the Principal Investigator and co-proponents. However, if the proponents have some good reason for including research honoraria for themselves, these can be made part of the budget proposal. Note that the grant may be used in tandem with (even as a counter-part funding for) an externally-funded project that would grant honoraria to the Principal Investigator and co- proponents. If this is so, the externally-funded project must be described in the proposal, and the delineation of the Challenge Grant project with respect to the externally funded project must be explained.
6. When the grant is used as a sub-project of an externally-funded project, it is presumed that there will be no double-charging of research expenses.
7. Normally, the grant is not meant to be used for teaching deloading. However, if the proponents see the need for some teaching deloading, the equivalent of the teaching deloading is monetized and becomes part of the budget proposal. Each unit of deloading is computed at 1/12 of the basic monthly salary, multiplied by the number of months that deloading is availed of. The budget for the deloading may not be subsequently converted to an overload, nor to a form of research honorarium.
8. The grant may be used to buy research equipment, reagents, software, and whatever other consumables and supplies that are required by the project. Note that the cost of such equipment should include all other incidental expenses for their purchase, such as tariffs / import fees, transport and delivery, permits, etc.
9. The grant may be used to construct experimental stations, research contraptions, prototype apparatus, and the like, but it may not be used for general office upgrade nor for furniture that are not directly related to the project.
10. The grant may be used for attending a local or international conference/forum where results from the project will be presented, but the intended conference/forum, along with the associated cost of the travel, must be part of the proposal. Note that unlike the other research incentives on campus, the target conferences/fora need not be scientific gatherings. These can be a symposium

among LGU leaders, a workshop with business leaders, a meeting with members of the legislature, and the like.

11. The grant is for a normal period of 1 to 3 terms, up to a maximum of 6 terms.
12. One of the expected outputs is a manuscript submitted for review to an ISI- or Scopus-indexed journal, a patent application, or a paper presented in a conference with Scopus-listed proceedings. These must be submitted as an annex to the final project report.
13. The grant comes with a standard research contract, similar to the Research Grant Agreement under the URCO, and would be dispensed in accordance with established policies and procedures for sponsored research.

Procedure and Criteria for Selection

All proposals must be submitted by the deadline date. A panel will be constituted by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation to evaluate the proposals and to rank the projects in terms of suitability for funding from DLSU.

The criteria for selection are the following, with no fixed weights assigned to each:

1. relevance and impact of project (with respect to the research goals and objectives of DLSU)
2. scholarly impact
3. collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of the project
4. appropriateness of approach or methodology
5. technical and procedural feasibility of the project
6. track record of proponent(s)
7. projected expenses vs. deliverables
8. dissemination and publication plan

The Panel shall be composed of the following:

1. the President or Chancellor (or a Brother, to be designated by the President)
2. the VCA (or a Dean, to be designated by the VCA)
3. two Professors Emeriti (or other suitably qualified external resource persons) to be invited by the President through the VCRI
4. a University Fellow (to be invited by the Head of the Society of Fellows)

The President, or his designate, will be the Chair of the Panel. As Chair of the Panel, the President may invite more Panel members from outside the University, depending on the nature of the submitted proposals.

In case there are significantly more than 8 proposals for a given Call, there will be a preliminary round that will shortlist the proposals. Based solely on the submitted written proposals, the shortlisting of proposals will be done by the VCRI and the URCO Director, and other resource persons, as needed, to be invited by the VCRI.

The Principal Investigators of the shortlisted projects will be invited to defend their proposal to the Panel for final selection. When there is a need for major proposal revisions, it is the prerogative of the panel to ask one, some, or all of the Principal Investigators to re-do the proposal presentation prior to final selection. During the final selection round, the VCRI, and the URCO Director may assist in the deliberations as non-voting members of the Panel.

The top 3 projects, based on the recommendation of the Panel, will be automatically funded by the Office of the VCRI. The remaining projects in the short-list, may or may not be funded, depending on the availability of funds and the strength of the recommendation of the Panel.

The decision of the Panel is final.

