UConn IDEA Grant Program
Tips for Preparing a Budget

The UConn IDEA Grant provides funding of up to $6,000 to support approved project work.

Group project expenses may exceed the $6,000 limit, but all expenses will need to be clearly explained and justified in the group budget. Groups should not expect that each member will receive $6,000 in funding. All budgets will be closely scrutinized, and awards will reflect justified project expenses.

There are limitations on how UConn IDEA Grant funding can be used. Not all purchases and expenses are allowable. Before applying, students are encouraged to meet with the UConn IDEA Grant program coordinator about their budget and intended expenses to ensure there are no conflicts.

The table below provides a **general overview** of expenses that are allowed and not allowed under the UConn IDEA Grant program. Additional details are included below the table.

Allowable Expenses	Discuss with UConn IDEA Grant Program Coordinator	Not Allowed
Supplies and consumables	Equipment rental costs	Purchase of durable equipment
Participant compensation	Equipment use fees	Normal expenses of being a UConn student
Travel	Low-cost equipment purchases	
Presentation expenses	Software purchases	
Stipend (please see exceptions below)	Hiring or compensating internal or external contractors	

Allowable Expenses

Applicants are encouraged to review all budget items carefully, and when possible, find economical ways to accomplish their goals. Check multiple sources to determine the cost of each significant expenditure. Investigate if there is a more cost-effective alternative to reaching your goal.

Supplies and Consumables
Consider the supplies and materials you will need for each step of your project. Your project timeline can be a useful tool to guide you. Make note of what you will need for each step, and then consider the quantities you will need. From there, research where you can purchase the supplies and materials, and what the estimated costs will be.

Examples:
- Laboratory supplies
- Art supplies
- Research supplies and materials
- Teaching supplies
- Building or prototyping materials
- Books (only if not available through the UConn Library or borrowing is not feasible)
- Publicity materials
- Printing expenses

Research or project supplies and consumables should be budgeted using reasonable estimates, documented to current costs. Applicants should consult their project mentor to determine what supplies and materials are available through the lab or department that they can use for their projects, if applicable.

Travel
Travel away from your home during the semester or the summer may be budgeted as part of a proposal if the travel is necessary for the proposed project work.
- Airfare: Search the web to get an estimate of costs and use an average number for your budget. Take into account factors that may impact ticket prices, such as seasonal or holiday rates.
- Transportation, including vehicle fuel allowance, parking fees, taxi/shuttle/train or bus fare: Review information on the UConn [Travel Services website](#) for current mileage reimbursement rates. The mileage reimbursement rates and mileage charts provided on the Travel Services website will help you estimate your travel expenses.
    - *Please Note: Do not include* commuting from home to campus during fall or spring semester as part of your travel expenses. These costs are considered normal expenses of being a UConn undergraduate.
- Lodging: Review information on per-diem reimbursement rates on the [Travel Services website](#) to help you determine a reasonable estimate. You can also review travel booking websites to determine the average rates and lodging options during the time period you intend to travel.
- Meals: Review information on per-diem reimbursement rates on the [Travel Services website](#) to help you determine a reasonable estimate.
- International Travel: If you plan to travel outside the U.S. you will need to research and factor in the costs for visas and immunizations (if applicable), and health insurance while abroad. Also consider how much you may need for expenses such as phone and internet access.

Please note that funding cannot be used to cover fees for study abroad programs, internship placement programs, or volunteer placement programs.

Other Allowable Expenses
Other expenses should be justified by their relation to the proposed work and documented to current costs.
- Participant compensation or incentives (as approved by the IRB)
- Presentation, screening, or exhibition costs
- Poster printing expenses

Stipend

Stipends defray costs and expenses during the time you are spending on an IDEA Grant project, allowing those who would be unable to participate without support the means to be part of the program and engage in meaningful project work. A stipend will only be considered when time spent on the IDEA Grant project takes away from other commitments. **You may not receive both academic credit _and_ stipend funding at the same time for work on a UConn IDEA Grant project.**

For academic year projects, students may not exceed 10 hours per week of project work while classes are in session. Students may receive stipend funding for more than 10 hours per week during breaks. In most cases, the maximum stipend for an academic year project should not exceed $4,300, though most stipends will be less than $4,300.

If requesting a stipend, please include your estimated hours per week and weeks of project work on your budget.
- Example: I plan to work 8 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters, 14 weeks each semester, and an estimated 10 hours per week during 4 weeks of winter break

To determine an IDEA Grant stipend, we use a baseline amount of $5,000 for 350 hours of project work, equivalent to other OUR funding programs. Stipends for fewer than 350 hours of project work are prorated.

Important note for financial aid recipients:
If you are a financial aid recipient (including tuition waivers, residential assistant waivers, loans, grants, work-study employment), your financial aid package may be revised because of receiving a UConn IDEA Grant. Please contact One Stop Student Services at (860) 486-1111 to discuss how this might affect your financial aid package.

Expenses to Discuss with the UConn IDEA Grant Program Coordinator

Equipment Rental Costs
The cost of renting equipment that is not available through your department or on campus is possible through the UConn IDEA Grant funding. **Please discuss your project needs with the IDEA Grant program coordinator to determine what can be covered.**

Equipment Use Fees
The cost of using equipment on campus can be covered by the UConn IDEA Grant. This cost should be, at most, no more than half your IDEA Grant budget. If your project requires additional funding for equipment use fees, please contact the IDEA Grant program coordinator to discuss your needs.

Low-Cost Equipment Purchases
Equipment purchases are limited. Purchases must be pre-approved and may be subject to University purchasing requirements, as well as University ownership of equipment once the project has ended. Students are encouraged to consult their project mentor to determine what equipment is available through the department and/or the University. **Applicants need to discuss equipment purchases with the IDEA Grant program coordinator to determine if the item(s) you want to purchase are allowed.**

Software
Software purchase is only allowed if no viable software option is available through campus computing resources. Review the [UConn Software Catalog](#) to determine what software is available through UConn ITS. The IDEA Grant can purchase university licensed software, such as Adobe Creative Cloud, through UConn ITS for student use.

Hiring or Compensating Internal/External Contractors
Hiring or compensating assistants or contractors for internal or external services is only allowed on a limited basis and under certain circumstances. **Applicants need to meet with the UConn IDEA Grant program coordinator before applying to discuss the project needs to determine whether the contract services you need are allowable expenses under the grant.**

Not Allowed

Purchase of Durable Equipment
Purchase of durable equipment including, but not limited to, laptops, computers, cameras, AV equipment, or microscopes, are not allowed with IDEA Grant funding.

UConn Student Expenses
The UConn IDEA Grant does not cover the normal expenses of being a student, including course tuition and fees, room and board costs, commuting and parking expenses during the academic year, and personal expenses.

Additional UConn IDEA Grant Budget Notes

Budget Exceeds $6,000
If your proposed project budget exceeds the UConn IDEA Grant funding limit ($6,000 for individual projects), please indicate your plan for covering additional project expenses. If your project mentor or research group has agreed to cover expenses that exceed the grant, or if you have received funding from another source, indicate that on your budget.

Other Funding Sources
If you have applied for or received funding from another source to cover expenses associated with your proposed project, you need to disclose that in your application. This includes UConn funding sources and external funding sources.

If you have questions on preparing a budget or if you have a question about allowable expenses, please contact UConn IDEA Grant program coordinator Melissa Berkey at Melissa.berkey@uconn.edu. Students can also schedule a meeting with Melissa through Nexus or email.