

2025-2026

**UC Office of the President Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Awards, and  
UC Davis Early Career Faculty Award for Creativity and Innovation**

Dear Colleagues:

With the launch of the [UC Office of the President \(UCOP\) Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Awards](#), we will combine the application process for this new award with our existing [UC Davis Early Career Faculty Award for Creativity and Innovation](#).

**The UC Office of the President (UCOP) Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Awards**

advance the University's enduring commitment to the scholarship and creative activity of early career faculty across the ten campuses of the University of California. Selected awardees will receive a one-time \$50,000 allocation to support their proposed research plan and associated allowable activities during the upcoming academic year. Assistant Professors, Assistant Professors of Teaching, and/or Assistant Professors in Residence are considered based on confirmation of their eligibility and determination of good standing. At least two awards will be granted to each UC campus.

**The UC Davis Early Career Faculty Award for Creativity and Innovation** was established in 2016 to promote and support exploration, creativity, and advances in research by UC Davis faculty. It is intended to encourage talented early-career faculty to develop their own intellectual pursuits. The Award is a one-time-only unrestricted cash award made to an eligible non-tenured ladder rank Assistant Professor in good standing to support exceptional scholarly or creative work. One Award will be granted annually.

These awards advance the University's enduring commitment to the scholarship and creative activity of early career faculty across the ten campuses of the University of California. **UCOP Early Career Faculty Research Excellence awardees** will receive a one-time \$50,000 allocation, and **UC Davis Early Career Faculty Awardees** will receive a one-time \$40,000 allocation to support their proposed research plan and associated allowable activities during the upcoming academic year.

**Nomination and Selection Process**

At UC Davis, the number of nominations that the Dean of each College or School may forward for consideration is limited to one (1), except that because of their large sizes two (2) nominees each may be proposed by the Deans of the College of Letters and Science and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. UC Davis Assistant Professors are eligible if they are non-tenured at the time of the Award start date (Spring 2026).

Each campus will nominate up to 10 Assistant Professors, Assistant Professors of Teaching, and/or Assistant Professors in Residence for consideration based on confirmation of their eligibility and determination of good standing, and an internal application and selection process of their design. Prior recipients of the Award are not eligible for future nomination, but Assistant Professors who applied in prior years but did not receive an Award are eligible to apply again. There is no restriction on the number of applications a department may forward to the Dean for review and possible nomination. Deans should remind Departmental Chairs to encourage Early Career Faculty to apply. Several government agencies (NIH, NSF, etc.) and professional societies award substantial research grants specifically designated for scholars in the early period of their careers. Since those grants also provide recognition and funding for scholars at the Assistant Professor level, nominees who have already received such honors will have lower priority for the UC Davis Early Career Faculty Award.

Up to 60 awards across the UC system will be made on an annual basis. The selection committee will identify the top two applicants from each campus, who will receive the first 20 awards. This ensures that every campus is represented in any given year. The remaining awards will be made without regard to campus affiliation.

### **Nomination Criteria**

All proposed projects should:

- significantly advance an applicant's career by helping to enable the completion of a milestone accomplishment (first book, major series of experiments, article(s) in major journals, a museum exhibit, etc.); and
- be important contributions to the advancement of knowledge and/or significant creative achievements.

All projects meeting the criteria above are welcome; the final selection will also bear in mind:

- Projects for which access to extramural funding is generally limited;
- Projects for which the federal funding environment has changed, making federal grants difficult to obtain or for which grants have been lost.
- Projects for which access to extramural funding may prove challenging because they entail a new research direction for the applicants and, thus, some proof of concept or establishing a track record in the area is needed.

**Proposal Components (See the attached Application Form, Required Components of the Application, and due dates.)**

- **Project Summary:** Please provide a brief overview of the project (1,700 characters, approximately 250 words)
- **Project Description:** Please provide a statement of the proposed research including significance of the project to relevant scholarship (7,000 characters, approximately 1,000 words)
- **Career Significance:** Please provide the goals for the award term and the impact of its completion (a) the project outlined in the Project Description and (b) the career of the applicant (3,400 characters, approximately 500 words)
- **Budget and Budget Narrative:** Please provide details regarding the use of proposed funding, for example, preparation of research articles/books, PI salary, visits to archives or field sites, support for graduate students/post-docs, development of alternative funding sources for existing research, etc. (3,400 characters, approximately 500 words). Award funds may be used for research-related expenses, such as the purchase of laboratory equipment, travel to a site where data will be collected, attendance at a professional meeting to present a paper or performance, as well as salaries for research assistants, students (including graduate student fees), or postdoctoral fellows on the research team. Award funds may also be used to pay the Summer Salary of a recipient who holds a nine-month appointment. With the approval of the Department Chair, Award funds may also be used to provide partial teaching relief by paying the salary and benefits of a lecturer who will provide the necessary course relief. Applicants may request teaching relief for no more than one academic quarter during the Award year, and their Departmental Chair must explicitly support this request when the application is first submitted.
- **Optional:** If applicable, please describe how any of the following pertain to your project (1,700 characters, approximately 250 words):
  - A project for which access to extramural funding is generally limited
  - A project for which the federal funding environment has changed, making federal grants difficult to obtain or for which grants have been lost
  - A project for which access to extramural funding may prove challenging because they entail a new research direction for the applicants and, thus, some proof of concept or establishing a track record in the area is needed
- **Related Awards and Grants:** please list prior and current grants/awards that support this project
- **Abbreviated CV** (10 pages maximum)
- **Budget** (1 page maximum)
- **References Cited** (1 page maximum)

## **Program Administration**

The UCOP Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Award is housed in the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Academic Programs (FAAP). The Vice Provost oversees the program, and senior staff manages its implementation.

The UC Davis Early Career Faculty Award for Creativity and Innovation is housed in the UC Davis Office of Academic Affairs. The Vice Provost oversees the program, and senior staff manage its implementation.

**Timeline:** Campuses will send out the Call for Proposals and conduct an internal selection process during the fall term. UC Davis will forward the names of ten nominees to FAAP by December 15, 2025. Upon final selection and announcement of awards, around April 1, 2026, FAAP will transfer funds to individual campuses to be administered at the campus level.

For 2025-26 awards, funds should be spent by June 30, 2027, with the possibility of a 12 month no-cost extension approved by the campus EVP or a designee.

At the conclusion of each annual funding cycle, a final report will be required from awardees.

FAQ: For more information, please visit the UCOP Early Career Faculty Research Excellence Awards [website](#) or the UC Davis Early Career Faculty Award for Creativity and Innovation [website](#), where you will find FAQs and/or additional details.

## **Required Components of the Application – See attached Application Form.**

1. Project Title
2. Applicant Information
  - a) Name
  - b) Campus
  - c) Department
  - d) Highest Degree
  - e) Position/Title
  - f) Academic Rank
  - g) Current Step
  - h) Expected year for tenure/academic review (if applicable)
  - i) Email
  - j) Phone

3. Institution
  - a) Address
  - b) Phone
4. Project Components
  - a) Project Summary: Please provide a brief overview of the project (1,700 characters, approximately 250 words)
  - b) Project Description: Please provide a statement of the proposed research including significance of the project to relevant scholarship (7,000 characters, approximately 1,000 words)
  - c) Career Significance: Please provide the goals for the fellowship term and the impact of its completion (a) the project outlined in the Project Description and (b) the career of the applicant (3,400 characters, approximately 500 words)
  - d) If applicable, please describe how any of the following pertain to your project (1,700 characters, approximately 250 words):
    1. A project for which access to extramural funding is generally limited.
    2. A project for which the federal funding environment has changed, making federal grants difficult to obtain or for which grants have been lost.
    3. A project for which access to extramural funding may prove challenging because they entail a new research direction for the applicants and, thus, some proof of concept or establishing a track record in the area is needed.
5. Budget Narrative: Please provide details regarding the use of proposed funding, for example, preparation of research articles/books, PI salary, visits to archives or field sites, support for graduate students/post-docs, development of alternative funding sources for existing research, etc. (3,400 characters, approximately 500 words).
6. Related Awards and Grants: please list prior and current grants/awards that support this project.
  - a) Source of funding
  - b) Title
  - c) Project status (past, current, pending)
  - d) Start date
  - e) End date
  - f) Total funding amount
7. Attachments:
  - a) Abbreviated CV (10 pages maximum)
  - b) Budget (1 page maximum)
  - c) References Cited (1 page maximum)