



# PGF Faculty Guide

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## Table of Contents

Overview of the PGF.....	2
Faculty Involvement with the PGF.....	3
Timelines and Deadlines.....	4
Helping Students Apply for a Full PGF Project.....	5
Helping Students Apply for Quick Funds.....	6
Syllabus Content.....	7
Alternative Funding Sources.....	8
Frequently Asked Questions .....	9

## Overview of the PGF

The Patriot Green Fund (PGF) strives to foster an environment where Mason can flourish academically in part through practicing environmental, social, and economic stewardship. This fund seeks to finance projects that have a high value in all three of these areas of sustainability. The fund will also work to raise awareness of and support for building a culture of sustainability on campus and in our surrounding communities. The PGF will empower students by providing them with an opportunity to lead and direct projects that will create positive change.

### **The Patriot Green Fund operates with three distinct goals:**

1. Enable students to conduct research and implement scholarship-related projects that demonstrate environmental leadership and benefit the Mason community and surrounding region.
2. Reduce Mason's environmental impact by making tangible improvements to habits, facilities and operations.
3. Improve understanding and awareness of, and support for, sustainability issues for the entire Mason community, leading to a strong community network and stewardship.

### **The PGF will award funding to projects in two distinct categories:**

1. **Infrastructure improvements:** \$80,000 of the fund is earmarked for facilities upgrades and other tangible environmental projects on campus. Some possible examples include solar and other on-campus renewable electricity generation, energy efficiency measures, alternative transportation infrastructure, increased composting and/or recycling, or building a biodiesel production facility.
2. **Student research:** The scholarship portion of the fund, up to \$20,000 per year, will fund research-oriented projects proposed by Mason students under the supervision of a Mason faculty member. These funds may cover the cost of supplies, lab equipment, and the student's time to develop the project. If material for the project is significantly expensive (i.e. if an item was valued over \$100.00), *applicants may be required to return the equipment at the end of their project's completion date to the PGF Committee.* Applicants will be notified by the PGF Committee during the application process if material must be returned.



## Faculty Involvement with the PGF

There are three ways that faculty can be involved in leveraging funding from the Patriot Green Fund.

1. *As an applicant on an infrastructure improvement project that is not class-related.* A faculty member may wish to execute a project as part of their own research that also improves the sustainability of Mason's campuses. These projects **MUST** fall under the infrastructure improvement project category, as **research projects led by faculty alone are not eligible for funds**. Please refer to the *Preliminary Application Guide* (<http://green.gmu.edu/pgf/applyforfunds.cfm>) for more information about how to execute your own project.
2. *As an applicant on an infrastructure improvement project which students in their class will work on.* The PGF is an ideal source of funding for faculty who want to encourage innovative sustainability-related team projects within the scope of their courses. Generally, this would be supported by the Quick Fund process, but if the project is larger or multi-semester (e.g., capstone required projects for engineering students), larger amounts may be requested through the full application process. For more information about how to apply for a Quick Fund grant, please read the Quick Fund Application Guide. For more information about how to put together a year-long project, you may contact [pgf@gmu.edu](mailto:pgf@gmu.edu) for assistance, but start by reading the Preliminary Application Guide first.
3. *As a supervisor for a research project proposed by a student or students.* All student research projects, and many infrastructure projects, could use the advice and talents of our faculty members. A research idea could be generated by the student, or as an offshoot of existing faculty research. Faculty in this capacity would assist the student project manager develop their project plans, bring up issues they may face, and just generally be a mentor. The student will ultimately need to be responsible for executing the project. For more information about this process, please read the Preliminary Application Guide and the Final Application Guide, in particular sections pertaining to Research projects. Please remember: research projects led by faculty or staff members alone are not eligible for PGF funds.

## Timelines and Deadlines

Quick fund submissions, which are less than \$1000, will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. All other proposals will be due three times a semester (for Fall in September, October and November, and for Spring in February, March and April). For exact deadline dates please refer to our website at <http://green.gmu.edu/pgf/index.cfm>. Full scale projects can take months to complete, so please plan your timeline accordingly. Quick Fund applications are reviewed on a rolling basis and take about 2-3 weeks to review and approve/deny.

Infrastructure improvement projects that will impact buildings or land use must also be approved by other university committees or approval groups; therefore, these applications may take a little longer to complete. Please be prepared and be patient. The PGF Committee will help you through the process as best as possible. The exception to this is Quick Fund projects. Please see the Quick Fund Guide on our website or the Quick Fund section of this guide for more information about that process.

## Helping Students Apply for a Full PGF Project

Students applying for a full PGF grant (i.e., not a Quick Fund scope project) must decide whether they will use the project to get course credit through their department (as an internship, independent study, etc.) or not. Faculty may support these students by assisting them with writing their applications, providing technical expertise, or by assisting them with navigating the administrative processes in their departments to get course credit. Faculty may also lead the application for a full scope PGF project, but must show that students are leading the project by and large. As an option where departments do not support internship credit, the Students as Scholars program (<http://oscar.gmu.edu>) offers the ability for students to register for 0-9 credit courses (UNIV 391/491) to conduct research for credit. For more information about how Students as Scholars could support your student research, visit their Faculty and Staff website page (<https://oscar.gmu.edu/fac-staff/>).

To start with, please read the Preliminary Application Guide and the Final Application Guide to get a sense of what is required to submit a successful project, and require the student do the same. You may find all documents at: <http://green.gmu.edu/pgf/applyforfunds.cfm>.

Generally speaking, if a student wants to complete a full-scale project within the school year, it is necessary to submit the Preliminary App in early September of the previous year. Please refer to the Preliminary Application Guide for more specifics.

## Helping Students Apply for Quick Funds

In order for projects to be considered for the quick fund process, faculty must notify the PGF Committee of their intent to offer PGF funding as an option to their students a month before the start of each semester (August 1st and December 15th).

In order for students to be able to get quick funding approval to execute their projects, they must have applications in by the end of the first month of classes (end of September and end of February). For detailed information regarding the application process, please see our *Quick Fund Guide*.

You can download all applications and guides on the PGF website: <http://green.gmu.edu/pgf/applyforfunds.cfm>. Please visit our website (<http://green.gmu.edu/pgf/index.cfm>) for more information or email the PGF Committee ([pgf@gmu.edu](mailto:pgf@gmu.edu)) with any questions.

## Syllabus Content

If faculty are interested in including the PGF as a possibility for semester-long class projects, we welcome it. We have provided content below that may be included in a syllabus for that purpose.

### ***Patriot Green Fund Grants for Student Projects:***

The Patriot Green Fund offers the opportunity to obtain small grants to execute projects relating to sustainability during the course of the semester. If you are interested in pursuing funding through this channel, please discuss it with the professor as soon as possible. *Projects needing PGF funding must be submitted **by the third week of classes at the latest** in order to get through the process in time to complete your project!* You can also read more information about how to PGF works by visiting [pgf.gmu.edu](http://pgf.gmu.edu).



## Alternative Funding Sources

### **Office of Student Scholarship Creative Activities and Research**

Specifically geared toward celebrating and encouraging *undergraduate* research and creative activities. OSCAR also supports undergraduate students seeking outside funding sources for their research.

<http://oscar.gmu.edu/>

### **University Life Programming Grant**

Every academic year, University Life awards grants for programs that impact the quality of campus life at George Mason University. Awards are typically under \$5,000.

<http://ulife.gmu.edu/university-life-programming-grant/>



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q:** If I'm a faculty member and want to get funding for my students to implement a class project, can I apply even though I am not sure which students will be working on it?

**A:** Sure! Be sure to update the Committee on what students will be working on the project once that decision is finalized.

**Q:** If I'm a faculty member and want to have my students compete with each other for ideas of projects that the entire class will work on for the semester. How does this work?

**A:** If you want the class to be able to complete a project by the end of the semester, you need to use the Quick Fund process. If you intend on soliciting multiple projects from your students, the Committee recommends that you first do a pre-screening (perhaps the class votes on the top three projects) and have them submitted all at the same time. The PGF Committee will solicit your input as the faculty member to choose the most feasible project.

**Q:** What are some examples of previous approved proposals?

**A:** You can see the variety of projects that have been funded on our page here <http://green.gmu.edu/pgf/index.cfm>.

**Q:** Who selects the award winners?

**A:** The PGF committee is made up of two staff members, two faculty members, and five students. Read more about the current committee <http://green.gmu.edu/pgf/pgfcommittee.cfm>.

**Q:** What if I'm unable to advise my student's research project?

**A:** For assistance with finding a mentor, undergraduates may contact the Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities, and Research (OSCAR) at "[find a mentor](#)" [web page](#) for assistance. Once they find a mentor, we require an email from their advisor at a gmue.edu email account outlining their role (as established by the applicant), in order to verify their support of the project.

**Q:** How many people will be granted funding?

**A:** This depends on the amount of funding applied for. We strongly suggest that facility improvement projects over \$20,000 and research proposals over \$5,000 seek other funding sources in addition to the PGF. These sources can be inside or outside of Mason, or may be personally funded through donations. (Note: Donations to any Mason effort will be provided with a donation receipt by the Foundation, for the purposes of tax deduction). However, we suggest you apply as soon as possible to ensure funds are spent in time and to ensure availability of funding.

**Q:** How can my students become involved as a Committee member for the PGF?

**A:** Students must be willing to serve a minimum of a one-year term and a commitment of 2-3 hours per week. If you're interested in applying please contact the PGF chairs at [pgf@gmu.edu](mailto:pgf@gmu.edu).

**Q:** Who can I contact with additional questions?

**A:** If you have any questions that aren't answered in this packet, don't hesitate to email [pgf@gmu.edu](mailto:pgf@gmu.edu) and your question will be rerouted to someone who can best help you.