



Faculty Guide

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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 unprecedented 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, zero waste initiatives, or alternative transportation infrastructure.
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 and lab equipment. 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](#) from the [PGF website](#) 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 for assistance, but please 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 serve 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

Funding is provided on a “first come, first served” basis; if we have allocated all funds before the end of the year, we will not award any more until the following fiscal year. Applications for all projects will be accepted on a rolling basis all year, but the Committee will meet only 4 times per year to review projects (Early/late fall semester, and early/late spring semester).

In order for a preliminary or final application to be reviewed during the committee meeting, it must be submitted by the posted deadlines, which can be [found on the PGF website](#). The exception to this is Quick Fund projects, which are reviewed on a rolling basis. Please see the [Quick Fund Guide](#) for more information about that process.

Because the application process for larger projects and research occurs in two phases - the preliminary application phase and the final application phase, **projects will take approximately one full semester to get fully reviewed and approved by the Committee**. 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. Your assigned liaison and other members of the Committee will help you through the process as best as possible.

Submit your preliminary proposal by the start of the month you want it reviewed...	then submit your final proposal by...	in order to start your project by...
September	November	December
November	February	March
February	April	May
April	September	October

In sum, the size and scope of the project will determine whether the project should be applied for as a full PGF project or a Quick Fund project, and the students should be made aware of the deadlines before class even starts in order to ensure a timely turnaround.

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 they 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.

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: <https://green.gmu.edu/patriot-green/how-to-apply-for-funds/>

Helping Students Apply for Quick Funds

In order for students to be able to get quick funding approval to execute their projects for a semester-long class, 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.](#)

[Please visit our website](#) for more information or email the PGF Committee at 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 <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.

OSCAR Mini Grants: Students who are working on a project can apply for up to \$500 of funding to enhance their success.

OSCAR Micro Grants: Faculty who are teaching a [Mason Impact course](#) can apply for funds to cover materials or other expenses required to teach the course. Faculty are eligible for this grant once per academic year.

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.

Parents Fund

The Parents Fund raises money that directly benefits the lives of current students and enhances their academic and co-curricular experience at Mason. Funds are used to support strategic initiatives within university/student life and partner offices that provide direct student support services. The maximum amount that can be requested is \$10,000.

Frequently Asked Questions

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 the [PGF Recipients](#) page of the PGF website.

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.](#)

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

A: For assistance with finding a mentor, undergraduates may contact the Director of OSCAR at oscar@gmu.edu, and graduate students may contact the Fellow of Sustainability Studies at sustainu@gmu.edu. You may also visit the Students as Scholars ["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: The PGF will allow for as many projects as funding allows. 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.

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 and your question will be rerouted to someone who can best help you.