

Guidelines for Applications for Funding from The Thematic Research Program, Academia Sinica

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The Thematic Research Program is intended to encourage researchers to engage in cooperative research programs designed to address intellectual or social issues of broader context and scope than possible with individually initiated and conducted research projects. Many of the unsolved problems of the 21st century are highly complex, requiring input from many fields. The team or interdisciplinary approach recruits researchers from the full gamut of relevant research or intellectual disciplines, allowing them to bring their backgrounds and expertise to bear on a common issue or problem.

Inasmuch as interdisciplinary research must necessarily cut across the boundaries of different fields and transcend traditional disciplines, it provides impetus for the fermentation of diverse ideas and approaches most likely to pave the way for the discovery of new knowledge and the opening up of new areas of intellectual activity. New basic discoveries have always culminated in the development of new technologies, which in turn have continued to fuel the discovery of new knowledge.

Through the Thematic Research Program, Academia Sinica encourages physical scientists, life scientists, social scientists, and scholars in the humanities to work closely together with their peers throughout the world, in an overall effort to contribute to the solution of some of the more pressing and complex issues of our society, including agriculture, energy, drinking water, natural resources, public health, medical care, economical globalization, global climatic change, environmental pollution, rapid social change, and the efficient utilization of human resources. Thus, aside from integrating various disciplines within the Academy, Academia Sinica also hopes to promote collaborations with universities as well as other research institutions, both local and abroad, to pursue common research goals,

and to raise its own research vistas and academic standards while conducting the research.

1. Thematic program projects should complement the mid- and long-term academic and research and development goals of Academia Sinica. The extent to which a project transcends disciplinary boundaries, the short and long term goals of the proposed work, its likely research outcomes, including the likelihood of and the extent to which the proposed research will lead to new knowledge, new basic discoveries, intellectual paradigm shifts, new breakthroughs or new technologies will be assessed in the evaluation for funding.
2. Project directors and sub-project principal investigators must be experienced and have had considerable previous academic and research accomplishments. The Thematic Research Program offers 3-year grant to a program project. Project directors must be full-time employees of Academia Sinica at the level of Assistant Research Fellow or above; or the faculty from universities joining Academia Sinica Degree Program, who shall be at the level of Assistant Professor or above, and jointly-appointed by Academia Sinica, according to the faculty list provided by the Executive Committee of Academia Sinica Degree Program. He or she must demonstrate an ability of coordination. The sub-project principal investigator must be at the level of Assistant Research Fellow or be a well-qualified specialist or scholar or above during the course of a project.
3. Applicants who meet the above guidelines and /or criteria may apply on-line before the deadline. In addition, all the required signed forms must be accompanied by an official document issued by the host Institute (preparatory offices or research center) and sent to the Department of Academic Affairs and Instrument Service. Once an application has passed the review process, the funding of the program project will be included in the budget of the “Thematic Research and Training Program” of Academia Sinica for the years approved. The project commences once the budget has been approved.

Documents required:

- a. A completed application form (including the curriculum vitae and a list of publications within the last five years of the Project Director and the Sub-project Principal Investigator(s));
- b. Related academic publications (within last five years) by the Project Director and Sub-project Principal Investigator(s);
- c. Final progress report detailing research achievements during previous

- grant period in case of a renewal application;
- d. A copy of proposal or its abstract for any of the sub-project which is similar to a project either in process or in the process of application from other funding agency by Sub-project Principal Investigators.
4. All program project applications are evaluated first by scholars/experts in the area(s) or field(s) of the proposed work appointed by the Academic Advisory Committee. The comments received from the first round of reviews are re-assessed by a second tier of reviewers, who will make a final recommendation regarding the decision of funding as well as the budget level of funding. The most important criteria to be used in the assessing of a program project from the Thematic Research Program are project integration, innovation, and the likelihood of possible research breakthroughs. The project director's ability to coordinate a program project, including budget planning and management, is also assessed. Finally, program projects that are commensurate with the mid-term or long-term academic and research and development goals of Academic Sinica will be given a higher priority.
 5. Approved research projects that involve experiments with biological material and genetic engineering must supply a letter of consent from the relevant institute stating that the safety of the biological experiments to be conducted have been reviewed; projects involving animal experiments must supply a letter from the relevant institute stating that it approves of the proposed use of animals; projects involving human subjects research must supply a letter of consent from the relevant institutions stating that its approval of the proposed research.
 6. An annual progress report is required for an ongoing project. This is submitted to the Academic Advisory Committee for review. The first year's interim report is an important basis for assessment of requests for funds for the third year. Upon completion of the project, a final report must be submitted for review. This report and its review will play an important part in the evaluation of any future applications for funding of Academia Sinica.
 7. If it is necessary to change the project director or principal investigator, or the contents of the project during the course of a project, a formal request must be submitted for approval in advance.
 8. The grant period of a program project from the Thematic Research Program is for maximum three years. New application is needed to renew or extend the project. The project director is responsible for coordinating sub projects and for the use of funds. Even if a given project involves cooperation with an institution outside of Academia Sinica, funds must be administered

through Academia Sinica, and cannot be transferred directly to the cooperating institution.

9. The relevant regulations and standard procedures of Academia Sinica regarding project funding, research expenditures, and personnel appointments are applicable to all program projects from the Thematic Research Program.
10. Any publications resulting from the project should indicate that funding for the project was supplied by Academia Sinica. The intellectual project rights accrued from the project shall comply with the relevant regulations of Academia Sinica.
11. Should an awardee of the Award be involved in academic ethics violations, his or her case will be processed according to the “Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Ethics Committees at All Levels, Academia Sinica.”
12. These ‘guidelines’ and any amendments will take effect once they have been approved by the President of Academia Sinica.

In the event of inconsistency between the English Guidelines and its Chinese version, the latter shall prevail.