

# FAQs

## TriBeta Research Foundation Scholarship Program

(last updated 8/24/2020)

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**Do all that apply, receive a grant?** NO

**Who are my proposal referees?** District Directors, BBB chapter advisors, and/or other Ph.D. faculty members at universities/colleges with Tri-Beta chapters in your region of the country. Attempts are made to match the research interest of the referee with that of the proposal.

**What kind of research is acceptable?** Any topic within the area of biology. Some research, e.g. with humans as the subjects or the use of certain chemicals and animals, may be restricted.

**What types of projects would not be considered fundable by this program?** Unnecessary pain and stress to animals involved; projects whose methods are not clearly supported by the proposal; literature reviews; projects that do not have a major biological component; classroom assignments; projects that do not generate original data or findings; projects that have not been approved by all research mentors.

**Are bioinformatics, computational biology and/or data mining (i.e. projects that might not involve actual laboratory work) eligible for funding?** Yes, in keeping with recent advances in computer applications to research in biology, we accept such projects provided the work generates original findings.

**What is the penalty for not presenting the research?** No research grant will be awarded to your chapter the following year.

**What is the average amount funded per grant?** \$500

**What is the total money available?** May vary from year to year. For all the areas (regions) in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, for 2019-2020 the total awarded was \$75,000.

**Is partial funding of grants common?** Yes, in fact, partial funding is more the rule than the exception.

**How is my presentation verified?** Most often this is done by district directors and/or regional vice presidents who attend the regional and national meetings of Tri-Beta. Occasionally, a chapter advisor is contacted to verify presentations and/or reasons for lack thereof.

**Can I send in Member registration fees with or after my grant submission and be eligible for a grant?** Yes, but this is discouraged, however, we understand that the submission date for proposals is early in the school term and therefore may precede fall member induction ceremonies. Hence, if the national secretary has a record of your membership by the grant submission date, you will be eligible for the award. If you have not been registered as a

member by that date, you will be ineligible for the award.

**How flexible within my requested budget must my grant administrator be?** The grant administrator should cooperate with your mentor if slight modifications of budgeted materials are needed as your research advances.

**Does the national office maintain a permanent record of grant recipients?** Yes

**Can I apply and receive a grant more than once?** YES, you could work on a project as a Junior and present a poster/paper. This research may have triggered another question to investigate as a Senior. The second study would therefore be eligible for funding consideration. However, proposals that request money to continue a previously funded project are not eligible for consideration unless the previously funded work was presented at a Tri-Beta meeting and the new request is for work beyond that funded in the previous year.

**Is there a limit to the number of grants that can be submitted from one chapter?** YES. No more than six proposals can be funded from any one chapter in a given year. The purpose of this limit is three fold. First, the manner in which funding is allocated across the U.S. regions is partly dependent upon the number of grant submissions from each region and therefore a chapter submitting many proposals can skew the funding allocations. Second, this limit is imposed to discourage class project assignments wherein students are asked to submit proposals so that an external reviewer can evaluate the quality of his/her work. Third, because the referees of these proposals are volunteers and we are sensitive to their time sacrifice, we hope that submitted proposals have been screened for quality by the submitting chapter.

**Is there a limit to the number of grants that can be submitted with the name of one research advisor?** YES. One faculty member can not mentor more than three projects funded through the Tri-Beta program.

**When is an IRB approval necessary for grant consideration?** Documentation of compliance with the policies of the institution must be supplied by the faculty member mentoring the research. If you are working with animals or human subjects you must abide by your institution's rules and regulations and explain in your proposal how you plan to abide by those rules and regulations.

**Are grants transferable to another person in the chapter?** NO

**What happens if I get no publishable/presentable results, but I do the work and spend the money?** The best researchers have all encountered this at times in their professional lives. Negative results that are presented with possible explanations can be very useful to scientists. You should plan to make that contribution (plus it is necessary to keep your chapter eligible for grants in the next academic year).

**What are the limits to what grant money can be used for?** The money can be used only for materials necessary to conduct the project including limited travel to and

from the collection site. Registration fees to attend Tri-Beta district or regional meetings to present results are also eligible in some regions (but not others, see your regional vice president to see if you qualify) but NOT to attend scientific meetings hosted by organizations other than Tri-Beta.

**Is there a penalty to having a faculty member's name appear on the grant proposal?** There must be a faculty mentor/advisor, so a faculty member's name will be on the proposal but it is best not to include that as one of the authors of the proposal. Tri- Beta grant proposals are for the purpose of giving undergraduates an opportunity to write a grant request. If it is apparent that a faculty member wrote the grant proposal (as opposed to proofing it) then the answer to the above question is: YES, the grant may not be funded. (In our experience, our faculty referees can usually detect this.)

**Is there a published format of an accepted grant proposal that I can use as a model?** Yes, we will have one posted on the national web page of Tri-Beta. The one chosen for this purpose was fairly typical of those that have previously been accepted for funding (i.e. with respect to the amount of funding requested, detail in procedures and literature review, and in format).

**How much money can I ask for in the proposal?** Usually the vast majority of requests/awards have been between \$250 and \$750, but occasionally more may be awarded if the money is available and a need is shown. This program is best viewed as a mini-grant program. It is rare for any proposal to be funded beyond \$1000.

**If my grant has two authors and we win an award, can we both be awarded a travel grant to the next national convention?** No, the \$750 can be applied to only one author. The second author is eligible to apply for a travel grant up to \$200 on a first- come first-serve basis (see form on the web page). This could change from convention to convention.

**Can a person other than the grant recipient present the results, provided the grant recipient was the person doing the work?** NO unless there is some type of emergency that precludes the author from presenting. If the latter is true, the grant recipient may appeal to the vice president in charge of the region for suggestions on how to meet the presentation requirements. Any decision made by the Vice President in this regard is final.

**Are associate members eligible for grants and if not can their name be on a grant proposal along with a Regular member?** The privilege of receiving a Tri-Beta research grant is only afforded to regular members but associate members can be named as co-authors.

**Will donations to the research scholarship program improve my chances of receiving a grant?** NO

**Is any of the research scholarship/grant used for administrative fees or indirect costs?** NO

**Are there allowances for emergencies that would prevent the grant recipient from making a scheduled presentation of his/her research?** YES. Communicate with the regional Vice-President.

**If I change my mind about doing a project after receiving the grant, what do I do?** Return the money to the National Office.

**If I receive a first place award, will my chapter still be eligible for a travel grant on my behalf or will that be included in my award?** Your \$750 award covers your travel, so you are not eligible for an additional \$200 travel grant but each other delegate in your chapter may apply for a travel grant -- see the form on the tri-beta web page.

**Is a complicated project more likely to receive funding than a less complicated project?** NO

**What are the most common reasons that a grant proposal is rejected?** Poor rationale for the project (e.g. insufficient introduction and background information); methods are not appropriate to answer the research question; materials requested are in excess or inappropriate for the project; overall lack of understanding of the proposed research; project is poorly written (e.g. format guidelines not followed, spelling and grammar errors).

**Are summer research internships eligible for funding?** These internships are usually already funded so generally the answer is no. If a research institution is simply supplying the equipment and the expense of a mentor's services, but disposable materials are the responsibility of the student, then such a grant proposal could be considered.

**My research mentor is not available for signing the research proposal form. Is a signature from another faculty member at my institution sufficient?** No. It is important that your proposal referees know that a representative of your institution will accept the responsibility of mentoring your project and approving your use of materials as well as following university regulations.

**Where does the funding for these grants originate?** A percentage of new membership fees received annually by the national office of Tri-Beta is invested for the purpose of using this money to fund this program.

**Is this money considered a research grant or is it considered a scholarship?** Its original intent was to serve as a research grant however because some institutions administer research grants and scholarships in different fashions, the executive committee of Tri-Beta wrote the original guidelines and named the program "Undergraduate Research Scholarship" in hopes that it would allow chapters to refer to it as either a grant or a scholarship depending upon which provided more expedient use of the funds.

**What is the advantage to accessing funds through this program?** [1] It provides an undergraduate with experience in writing grant proposals; [2] If the proposal is reasonably feasible and meets the guidelines, it has a very good chance of being funded to some degree; [3] It is an excellent addition to a resume when an undergraduate student can say that he/she has written a successful research proposal that went through a faculty review process and was externally funded; [4] It represents a return on your investment of membership fees that you paid to become a member of Tri-Beta.

**What are the important things to know about the deadline for proposal submissions?** The proposal must be submitted as a hard copy to the national office of Tri-Beta by the deadline stated in the packet of information your chapter receives at the start of the fall semester (the deadline is usually mid-September). The national secretary confirms your membership and puts the date that she received your proposal on the proposal. These two items are important because the proposal referees will want to know that you are a regular member and they will want to know that you met the deadline for submission of the proposal (allow yourself enough time for the proposal to arrive at the national office, late submissions can not be accepted). Following the deadline, the proposals are sent as a package to the Regional Vice Presidents who distribute them to referees. Usually by the first of November, the national secretary will have received the evaluations and recommendations as to grant recipients. She will inform the recipient by letter and with a check made out to the designated administrator of funds at your institution.