

HASS Start Up Grant
Pre-Award Frequently Asked Questions

1 Application

1.1 Prior to joining NTU, I was told that I would have an SUG when I start my appointment. Do I still need to submit an SUG application?

Yes. An application is needed and is subject to review by the Associate Dean (Research), Dean of the College, and the Provost. During the review, if there are items in the proposed budget that are deemed to be insufficiently justified, the reviewers may adjust the amount of SUG to be funded, even if a specific SUG amount has been promised in your contract.

1.2 Is there a deadline for submitting the SUG application?

There are two SUG calls each year. The deadlines are at the end of January and August and are timed as such, so that new faculty arriving at the start of either semester can have their SUGs set up within the same semester. If your appointment begins between February and August, your application deadline will be in end-August; if your appointment begins between September and January, your application deadline will be in end-January.

[Also see #1.3]

1.3 I would like my SUG to start as soon as possible upon joining NTU. Can I apply for my SUG before my appointment starts?

Yes. You are welcome to submit your SUG application before your appointment starts. If your SUG is submitted at least two months prior to your appointment, there is a good chance it will be approved by or around the time you join NTU, as the review process takes approximately two months. Contact your School's Research Office for the application documents if you would like to submit your grant application before the next scheduled deadline.

[Also see #1.2]

1.4 What should be my proposed start and end dates of my SUG?

If you are submitting your SUG at the end of August, the start date of the SUG will likely be sometime in November; if you are submitting at the end of January, the start date will likely be end-March or early April. This is because the review process for SUG applications can take approximately a couple of months from the application deadline. You will be notified of your official start date after the budget phasing stage of the review process. Until the grant's official start date, you must not incur any expenses, as Finance categorically does not allow reimbursements for expenses incurred prior. The end date will be up to three years from the start date.

1.5 I submitted my SUG application but have not heard whether it has been approved. Can I buy equipment first, go on my research trip now, or hire my research assistant, while waiting for the approval to come through?

No. All SUG-related expenditures have to be dated on the start date of the grant or later. The official start date of your grant will be confirmed in a letter of award from the College, sent after Finance has created your research account.

1.6 I missed the SUG call deadline. What do I do?

Inform your School's Research Office, which together with the College's Research Office, will work out an arrangement.

1.7 Can I defer my SUG, so that it starts later?

The SUG is to be awarded within six months from the start of a new faculty's appointment. If you need to defer your SUG, please inform your School's Research Office at the earliest opportunity. You will have to write in to the Associate Chair (Research) of your School and the Associate Dean (Research) of the College and explain why you need to defer your SUG.

2 Budget preparation

2.1 Are there budgetary limits on items that I need to be aware of?

Yes. There are caps on the rates for hiring manpower (e.g. student assistants and project officers), laptops, materials and consumables, meals for organizing conferences, airfare and accommodation allowances for visiting scholars, and conference/supplementary travel. Please refer to the 'SUG Fundable and Non-Fundable Items' document enclosed in the grant call.

2.2 How do I justify using my SUG to buy a laptop?

Provide as much information as possible on what the laptop is for and how it is needed for your project (e.g. frequent fieldwork overseas, specific types of data collection). Saying that a laptop is needed for working while away for conference presentations or at home may not be an adequate justification.

3 Budget phasing

3.1 What is the difference between the budget section of SUG application and the budget phasing form that I have to fill out at a later stage?

The budget on your application form is an indicative one that is used by the reviewers to assess whether your proposed budget is justified.

At the budget phasing stage, the College will let you know whether your application has been approved; adjustments to the budget, if any, will be conveyed to you at that point. Regardless of whether your budget has been adjusted, you will be asked to fill out the budget phasing form to confirm the funds to be allocated to the various budget categories. This form informs Finance of the amount of funds to load into the various categories when creating your SUG research account. It also allows Finance to know what your estimated expenses for each financial year will be.

3.2 When does the financial year begin?

NTU's financial year begins April 1st each year and ends March 31st the following year (e.g. FY2014 starts on April 1st 2014).

3.3 I have submitted the budget phasing form. When can I start tapping into my SUG funds?

You will receive an official SUG award letter after submitting the budget phasing form. The letter will indicate the grant's start date and your research account number. Upon accepting the SUG, you can start using the funds from the start date of the grant.

3.4 I need to go on a research/conference trip soon, but have not received my SUG award letter. Can I assume that my SUG funds will cover my travel expenses, which I have budgeted for in the budget phasing form?

No. Even if a preferred start date were stated on the budget phasing form, the creation of your research account may be delayed for a variety of reasons. To ensure that your travel expenses can be reimbursed, you should wait for confirmation of your grant's start date and make sure that invoices and receipts do not indicate an earlier date than the official start date of your grant.

[See #3.3]