

UFII Request for Applications: **SEED Fund Program with focus on AI**

Timeline

Application Deadline:	November 1, 2021
Anticipated Notice of Awards:	December 20, 2021
Award Funding Period (up to 12 months):	January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Purpose and Areas of Interest

The UF is making strategic investments in AI at all levels, including education programs and research infrastructure, both physical (HiperGator AI) and intellectual (new faculty hires). In response to the UF AI initiative, the UF Informatics Institute (UFII) supported 16 projects in the academic year 2020-21. The UFII continues its engagement with the UF AI Initiative in the current academic year (2021-22) and invites interdisciplinary, faculty-initiated research projects that show strong potential for extramural support.

Projects should be innovative, support the mission and goals of the Informatics Institute, and have strong potential for garnering future funding from external sources. Seed Funds are not intended to support on-going projects or to supplement current research, only new projects and/or new collaborative partnerships. Projects should be 'shovel-ready', meaning seed funds will be used to produce proof-of concept data that can be used to obtain extramural funding.

The focus of this Seed Fund program is on novel applications of AI in the following broad areas:

- (1) **Fairness, Accountability and Transparency in AI.**
- (2) **Scientific Foundations of AI.**
- (3) **AI in Agricultural and Natural Systems.**
- (4) **AI in Smart Engineered Systems.**
- (5) **AI in Health.**
- (6) **Interactions of AI and Society.**
- (7) **AI in the Natural Sciences.**

Total Available Funding and Award Amounts

UFII will make a total of up to \$420,000 available for this RFA depending on quality of submissions and budget availability with the maximum at \$40,000 per award.

Eligibility

To be competitive, proposals must include or meet the following criteria:

- Be multi-/interdisciplinary and require faculty from at least two departments/units/colleges. **Single-investigator and/or single department PIs proposals are not eligible.** For a list of potential collaborators across disciplines and within our different thrust areas please visit our member faculty page.
- Proposals involving hypothesis-driven research should clearly and explicitly state the hypothesis. Projects that are methodological should focus on specific, key interdisciplinary problems.
- Proposals may be submitted by any UF faculty member (PI) eligible to submit a proposal to an external funding agency (see [Eligibility to Submit a Proposal for External Funding](#)). Courtesy, Adjunct, Visiting and OPS faculty; Assistant In, Associate In, Senior Associate In; Research Associates; and Postdoctoral Associates are not eligible to be PIs; they may participate as co-PIs or co-investigators.
- Prior PIs or Co-PIs who have been funded through an UFII SEED or UFII Fellowship in the last three years will not be considered for funding.

Awardee Requirements

All principal investigators are expected to meet the following reporting requirements within the performance period of their award:

- Serve as a guest speaker or present a poster at the UFII Annual Symposium.
- Report any external funding you have or will submit for using the results/data from your awarded SEED funds.
- Serve, upon request, on a UFII Review committee for other UFII programs.
- Report any papers published or submitted for publishing using SEED Fund results/data. Be sure to site in the publication “This project was supported by the UF Informatics Institute (UFII) SEED Funds”.

Review Process and Criteria

Proposals submitted by the faculty to UFII will be reviewed by faculty review panels, which include members of the UFII Steering Committee and other interdisciplinary faculty on campus. The faculty review panels will make recommendations to the Director of UFII and a decision will be finalized.

Priority will be given to new investigators who have not received funding from prior UF Informatics Institute programs before.

Budgeting and Spending Requirements

- Funds can only be used for direct costs.
- Funds cannot be used to support faculty salaries or major equipment purchases.
- Funds are non-transferable.
- Funds must be used in the 12-month period following their release. Any un-spent funds will be returned to the UFII at the end of the 12-month funding period.
- Funds must be used for the activities detailed in the application.
- Continued funding during the award period is contingent on compliance with awardee requirements and adequate progress in meeting the project timeline.
- No cost extensions will be very strongly discouraged. PIs are to remember that projects must be 'shovel-ready'.
- There are no indirect costs associated with this grant.
- Any subproject requests should be directed to Alethea Geiger (ageiger0213@ufl.edu) in order to be established. Subprojects are not permitted without prior UFII approval.

Application Instructions

Proposals should consist of the following materials in this sequence attached at the SEED Fund Submission Portal as a single PDF file. Portal link will be available on the UFII website under Programs> SEED. **Proposals must use single spacing; font size no smaller than 11 point; minimum 0.5 inch margins on all sides; tables and figure legends can be in 10 point.**

- **Cover Page:** Include title, list of PIs, co-PIs and all faculty contributing time to the project and their departmental/college affiliations, email address of primary contact PI, project start date and budget amount requested of UFII funds.
- **Abstract:** Up to 1 page. Explain the rationale for the work to be accomplished in terms that can be understood by an "intelligent non-expert."
- **Project Description:** Up to four (4) pages of text MAXIMUM describing the project. If proposals are longer than 4 pages, only the first 4 pages will be reviewed. The project description should be written such that it can be understood by an interdisciplinary faculty committee. PIs must keep in mind that their proposals are not being evaluated by a discipline-specific committee, but rather by an interdisciplinary one.
- **Project description to include the following:**
 - Area from the list of 7 topics outlined above
 - Specific Aims/Objectives
 - Background and Significance- proposals should explicitly spell out the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed project.
 - Innovation & Potential Impact of Research
 - Approach & Research Design
 - Preliminary Data (if applicable)
- **Project Budget :** Proposed budget entered on the UFII Budget Template. Proposed budgets should be up to \$40,000 and a duration of 1 year. The budget may include all normally allowable costs of research as outlined in the University Cost Accounting

Standards, with the exception of faculty salaries and indirect costs. **Faculty salaries may NOT be charged to the Seed Fund grant.** There are no indirect costs associated with these grants. SEED Funds are to be expended on campus. Exceptions will be allowed in instances where specific techniques are not available on campus. The review process will include a close scrutiny of the budget, and the budget can be negotiated prior to the setup of the award.

- **Budget Justification** (2 pages maximum)
- **Literature Cited** (no page limit)
- **Key Personnel:** A list of the individuals to be involved and details of their participation. (no page limit)
- **Plans to obtain continuing external support for the project** (2 pages maximum).
Proposals must specifically list the sources of external support that will be pursued following the SEED Award, providing the following information: RFA/RFP/Solicitation number, Agency submitting to, tentative date of submission, and why/how the data gathered from this SEED project/resulting publication is aligned with the requirements of the solicitation. This information will be used for follow up on reporting requirements, thus be as specific as possible.
- **Biosketch(s):** A current biosketch of the Principal Investigator and each of the Co-PIs/Co-Investigators (NIH- or NSF-style biosketch), (Maximum of 4 pages for each individual).
- **Current & Pending:** A list of the current and pending funding for the PI and Co-PI's with percent of effort committed should also be provided (4 pages maximum for each individual).
- **Appendices:** if necessary to support the proposal, should be brief; please do not attach manuscripts or other lengthy documents.

Contact for Questions

Please email questions to:

George Michailidis (gmichail@ufl.edu)

or

Alethea Geiger (ageiger0213@ufl.edu)

Phone: 352-294-3912

Please submit proposals via the UFII Website under the SEED Submission Portal.