



Policy Title:	Crowdfunding
Policy Number:	ACAD-129
Revision Date:	February 2022
Policies Superseded:	ACAD-308
Policy Management Area(s):	Research

SUMMARY:

Researchers, faculty and staff at Coastal Carolina University have used crowdfunding as a resource for funding research and other projects. The University has cultivated relationships with specific crowdfunding websites to support these efforts. These sites provide a source for one-time research or for other projects that weren't allotted significant department resources to bridge a funding gap, with fundraising goals typically between \$3,000 and \$25,000. The University has selected experiment.com for funding research and other projects in the sciences, and givecampus.com for funding education, humanities and business projects.

POLICY:

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Crowdfunding refers to the practice of funding a project or venture by collecting many small donations of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet. Crowdfunding can be used to raise funds for a wide variety of projects initiated by faculty, staff, students and groups at Coastal Carolina University.

II. THE USE OF CROWDFUNDING FOR RESEARCH AND OTHER PROJECTS

- A. The following procedures apply to all faculty, students and staff using a crowdfunding platform to generate funds to support research projects using Coastal Carolina University personnel, facilities, equipment or resources.
 - 1. Applicants must be faculty, staff or students of the University. All funds received will be treated as grant funding and will be deposited into a grant account that will be the property of the University. All funds must come directly to the University.
 - 2. All crowdfunding projects, particularly those using any University facilities, equipment, personnel or resources, must receive unit-level (i.e., departmental and dean) approval prior to the beginning of the

crowdfunding effort. Completed [request for approval forms](#) are to be routed both through the department chair and dean and then to the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Services (OSPRS). Projects that involve equipment purchases may have to be approved by the University's Procurement Services to assure compliance with University and state procurement guidelines. Once approved, the form will be returned to the researcher (faculty/staff/student) for the project to begin.

3. Coastal Carolina University reserves the right to reject funds that utilize any University facilities, equipment, personnel or resources in the event that prior approval was not obtained.
4. Use of the Coastal Carolina University's insignia, logo and other related promotional branding materials requires the permission of University Communication.
5. The project leader or team members cannot have a financial interest in the crowdfunding company or any interest that is in conflict with the discharge of Coastal Carolina University duties. Project leaders or team members cannot accept gifts or anything of economic value from the crowdfunding company if it could be reasonably expected that the gift or favor would influence the action of project leaders or team members with respect to the company. In addition, gifts from the company cannot be accepted if the value of any gift exceeds \$50 in total. Unsolicited advertising or promotional items of nominal value, such as pens or notepads, can be accepted.
6. Federal grant/contract award requirements are only applicable if the project is already partially funded by a federal grant, contract or award, or if an award of this type is being applied for. Federal funding sources, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, which includes the Public Health Service and the National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Defense and the National Science Foundation, do not allow any scientific overlap between projects they fund and any other project funded by a separate source (e.g., via crowdfunding). The project leader is responsible for ensuring that the crowdfunded project is outside the scope of federally funded research and complies with the terms of the grant or contract award.
7. Researchers are required to comply with all laws and applicable Coastal Carolina University policies and procedures, including those related to research compliance such as Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), conflicts of interest, intellectual property rights and all other relevant compliance requirements. All funds must be spent according to University, state and federal procurement guidelines.
8. Crowdfunding relies on the personal and social networks of the project team to drive traffic to the team's crowdfunding page. Email lists used in support of these campaigns will only come from the personal contact lists of those involved in the project and will not be pulled directly from the

Coastal Carolina University alumni donor database or from any other centralized University email list, unless the project team is authorized to do so by the dean of the benefiting school or college. When setting up an account on the crowdfunding site, University faculty and staff are reminded NOT to use their University account credentials for a username or password.

9. Tangible items of fulfillment (material items or gifts that are delivered in exchange for funding) are not to be offered by the project leader. Coastal Carolina University will not support a fulfillment process through crowdfunding and will not process donations that reduce the full tax-deductible value of the donation.
10. Since Coastal Carolina University holds title to any equipment purchased for the project, purchases may require prior approval by the University's Procurement Services to assure compliance with University and state procurement guidelines.
However, projects not using any University resources whatsoever and which involve activities outside the employee's scope of employment do not require institutional approval and will not be accepted by the University. Tax and legal implications are the responsibility of the individual when funds do not come directly to the University, and it is the sole responsibility of the individual to determine such implications.
11. Project leaders are advised that crowdfunding sites do not provide intellectual property protection. Presenting the campaign to the public could result in others using the ideas and research before they can be protected with patents or other legal measures. Coastal Carolina University has an interest in any discoveries or inventions if the project is performed as part of the employee's University duties. If the crowdfunding company desires any interest in the project or if there is concern about intellectual property protection, please consult with University Counsel.