

## Guidance on NIH Academic Research Enhancement (R15) Programs (AREA and REAP)

### **What has changed:**

NIH has significantly revised its R15 AREA program and is now offering two programs that target different audiences:

1. Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) grants are for Undergraduate-Focused Institutions that are not Health Professional or Graduate Schools; and
2. Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP) grants are for Health Professional Schools and Graduate Schools

The easiest way to determine which program you may be eligible to apply for is to use the NIH Eligibility Decision Tree: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/R15-Eligibility-Decision-Tree.pdf>. As shown in this decision tree, faculty whose primary appointment is in a health professional school or graduate school are only eligible for REAP. Those whose primary appointment is in a non-health professions unit (e.g. College of Arts & Sciences or College of Engineering) with a greater undergraduate than graduate student enrollment are eligible for the AREA.

Based on the provided definitions, frequently asked questions, and this decision tree, it appears that faculty in the University of Memphis School of Public Health, College of Nursing, and School of Communications Sciences and Disorders are eligible for REAP, and all other units are eligible for AREA.

\*\*\*Please note that the majority of the research team for AREA proposals must be comprised of undergraduate students as a central goal of the AREA is to “give undergraduate students an opportunity to gain significant biomedical research experience through active involvement in the research.” Graduate students are secondary on AREA proposals. There is no requirement that undergraduate students be involved in REAP projects; however, “undergraduate and/or graduate students” must be involved in the research.

### **What has stayed the same:**

The eligibility requirement that no more than \$6 million in annual NIH funding (based on federal fiscal year) has been received in 4 of the past 7 years remains. This threshold applies to the University as a whole, for REAP applications, and to the non-Health Professional Units of the University, for AREA applications. All units at the University of Memphis remain eligible.

Standard R15 receipt dates remain February 25, June 25, and October 25.

The maximum project period remains three years, and the maximum direct cost budget for the project remains \$300,000.

Also unchanged is the requirement that AREA/REAP PIs may not currently serve as PI on an active NIH research grant at the time of the R15 award.

### **Where can I get more information?**

R15 Program Webpage: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/r15.htm>

### **Current Program Announcements:**

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-18-714.html> (AREA Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-19-133.html> (AREA Clinical Trial Required)

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-19-134.html> (REAP Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-19-135.html> (REAP Clinical Trial Required)

\*\*On March 19<sup>th</sup>, NIH also issued a special notice highlighting its support for AREA data science research proposals: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-GM-19-021.html>