

Space Research Initiative (SRI) Call for Proposals

Announcement and Guidelines Release Date: August 2026

Deadline for proposals: September 4, 2026

Research, development, demonstration, and project preparation proposals to the Space Research Initiative (SRI) are hereby requested by the Florida Space Institute (FSI) and its UCF collaborators to support the following priority areas:

- Biomanufacturing in LEO, cislunar space, or on the lunar surface (science and/or engineering)
- Materials manufacturing in LEO, cislunar space, or on the lunar surface (science and/or engineering)
- Instrumentation, electronics, and/or payload development for use in LEO, cislunar space, or on the lunar surface
- Logistics, operations and/or spacecraft-surface interactions on lunar and planetary surfaces, (optionally including use of FSI's Exolith facility) and/or modeling of spacecraft-surface interactions
- NASA-published civil-space engineering shortfalls: power generation and storage, precision landing, communications, PNT, autonomy/robotics, thermal management, dust mitigation, high-performance computing in radiation/thermal/dust environments, charge dissipation, orbital debris/impact protection, test/demo environments, and resilient domestic space-qualified supply chains infrastructure enhancement
- Human performance optimization in space through the integration of artificial intelligence, large language models, wearable biosensors, and digital health technologies to assess physiological status, predict performance decrements, and inform operational decision-making

Priority will be given to proposals in the research areas above. Other areas of space-related research and development may also be proposed.

The primary objective of this call for proposals is specifically to seed efforts that will lead to new external funding in 2027/2028; particular emphasis will be placed on efforts that have good prospects to win substantial awards from funding agencies or industry sponsorships.

All proposals must include clear target organization(s) for obtaining extramural funding, and a demonstration of how the proposed UCF-funded work will increase the probability of obtaining that external funding (from funding agency or industry collaborator) is required. Alignment of the proposed area of research with an external funding source must be demonstrated in the proposal. If a target funding agency is from the federal government system, please refer to their latest strategy info, and/or to this [federal directive from the White House](#).

Funding requests of up to \$100k/project may be considered. The SRI support is limited to \$50k/project. Projects with matching funds from another UCF unit may leverage those funds in combination with the SRI funding, for a total project budget of up to \$100k/project. The earliest start date will be October 1, 2026. Awards are expected to be expended before May 31st, 2027.

ELIGIBILITY:

Proposals are invited from UCF researchers who are [eligible to be a PI on proposals](#), with strong preference for interdisciplinary, cross-college/institute teams that form new collaborations. Projects must represent a new research direction, newly constituted team, or clearly distinct initiative, rather than incremental support for existing funded work. Funds are intended as seed support to enable competitive external grant submissions; applicants should demonstrate a credible pathway to follow-on funding.

If the submitter of a proposal does not meet the eligibility requirements as per the [UCF PI rules](#), please contact mildred.rodriguez@ucf.edu before submission, to see if the proposal can be paired up with an eligible UCF person. This applies to researchers interested in coming to UCF as researchers, and to proposals from industry.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

All proposals received will be reviewed by an *ad hoc* committee. The FSI Director will make all award decisions following these reviews, in collaboration with other UCF units when collaborative funding is involved.

The evaluation criteria for proposals will be:

- Goals, merit, clarity, and feasibility of the proposed project.
- The win likelihood and strategic importance of the future external funding opportunity/opportunities associated with the proposed project. A demonstrated direct link to intended future funding opportunities that would be made more achievable through SRI funding will be favored.
- Qualification of the PI and team as evidenced by related past work, publications award success.
- The presence, relevance, and merit of collaboration between FSI, other UCF units, other Florida universities, and/or industry.
- Additional consideration will be given to proposals involving industry partners providing cash and/or in-kind support, and in particular for cash matches. When cash matches from industry are involved, FSI will support applications to the Florida High-Tech Corridor matching grants program (if eligible under their rules).

After evaluation, these proposals will be assigned as “strongly support”, “support”, “support, if possible” and “do not support”, for final funding recommendations.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Proposals must be submitted via email to alain@ucf.edu, with a copy to mildred.rodriguez@ucf.edu. Proposals must be composed of one PDF file named 2026SRI_PI last name containing the proposal narrative, and one Excel spreadsheet named 2026SRI_PI last name_budget containing the proposal budget.

In an effort to minimize the administrative burden on departments, proposals do not require Huron submission. Proposals should be submitted to the provided submission emails. If the proposal is selected for funding, a Huron Funding Proposal will be submitted.

Formatting: Proposals should be at least in 12-point font or greater, with at least 1-inch margins throughout. Figure legends and tables can be in 10-point font. Proposals should consist of the following materials in this sequence:

Cover Page containing the following:

Proposal Title:

Principal Investigator/Institutional, College and Departmental Affiliation

Telephone:

E-mail:

Co-Investigators:

[INSERT NAME, AFFILIATION(S), & CONTACT INFO FOR EACH]

Project Start and End Dates:

Proposed Cost to SRI: Total\$ (max \$50k)

Other UCF\$ (not mandatory)

Industry/Other \$ (not mandatory)

Abstract/Overview. Start as a new page and limit to one (1) page, summarizing each proposal element below.

Project and Approach.

Up to five (5) pages of text maximum describing the project. If proposals are longer than 5 pages, only the first 5 pages will be reviewed. Figures and tables are included in the 5-page limit; references are not included. Project description to include the following: Describe the proposed project, its technical content, context, strategic value to alignment with solicitation priorities, and each task within the project. Address how the project aligns with the priorities of targeted future funding sources.

Management Plan. Limit to two (2) pages. Include a project schedule, by task, and show deliverables (if applicable).

Facilities, Software Tools, and Equipment. Describe the required facilities and equipment for the proposed project, making clear what facilities, software tools, and equipment are already available and what must be procured/otherwise obtained to carry out the proposed project. Equipment (over \$10k) purchases shall be vested with UCF. If appropriate (laboratory work for example), also describe the space that will be used to conduct the proposed work. Limit to two (2) pages.

PI and Team. Describe the qualifications of the PI and each Co-I, limited to one (1) page for each person; include URLs of PI and team web pages on their bios.

Collaborations (with other universities or with industry). Describe any such collaboration and how it will contribute to furthering the research, limited to one (1) page.

External Funding Opportunities. Describe the external funding opportunities that are expected to result from the proposed SRI investment. Include the specific funding agency/company, the particular funding opportunity(ies) targeted for submission by December 31, 2027, the estimated likelihood of award for each opportunity, the proposer's prior experience with the identified agency/company, and the strategic importance of each opportunity to advancing UCF's space research portfolio. Responses should provide sufficient detail to demonstrate a clear pathway from SRI support to competitive external funding. **Proposals that do not address this fully will not be selected.** Limit to two (2) pages.

The investigator(s) should describe any potential for commercialization. How may the research relate to current commercial or industrial applications? Could the research lead to new products and markets? If possible, estimate the time to market, including all certification steps. Proposals should be explicit whether successful results will be published. How will progress toward potential commercial application be measured? Describe funding received to date and give an estimate of funding required to advance the product to market. List any potential opportunities for the development of intellectual property.

References should be cited together at the end of the proposal. No page limit

Budget. Start as a new page and describe the budget to support your project. The budget may include all normally allowable costs of research. For proposals involving partnerships with Florida aerospace companies, please indicate budget contributions from the industrial partners.

Include the following breakdown:

1. Labor – List investigators and support staff and percent effort of each.
2. Equipment – Identify equipment to be purchased under this award.
3. Subcontract Costs – Identify consultants or subcontracts, if applicable.
4. Materials – List materials that will be purchased under this award.
5. Travel – List locations, approximate dates and justification of travel.

Note - Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs: No F&A is allowed for these projects. No cost share is required for this effort.

DEADLINES

The deadline for submission of full proposals via email is 5PM EST, September 4, 2026. Questions about this call for proposals may be addressed to Mildred Rodriguez-Solivan at mildred.rodriguez@ucf.edu.

Receipt of proposals will be confirmed with the principal investigator via e-mail notification.

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

Every effort will be made to notify Principal Investigators of their award status within 4 to 6 weeks upon submission. The earliest start date will be October 1, 2026.

REPORTING

All funded efforts will be required to submit a final report due 30 days after the project end date. This report shall detail proposal submissions and wins as a result of their SRI funding.

If there is a change in the proposed execution of the project, a formal proposal request is needed (1 page is sufficient) that explains the rationale for the change.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Points of contact for UCF units collaborating with FSI for this solicitation:

Florida Space Institute: Alain Berinstain (alain@ucf.edu) and Mildred Rodriguez-Solivan (mildred.rodriguez@ucf.edu)