2025 Cannabis Academic Research Grants Questions and Answers

The Department of Cannabis Control received 58 questions during the Questions and Answers period ending July 18, 2025.

analyzes [REDACTED] be considered responsive?	determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
Would the budget allow for [REDACTED] purchased from those retailers?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
I noted that any research that studies cannabis will be considered, although our specific topic does not directly align with the listed priority areas. Briefly, our project focuses on [REDACTED] Given the scope of our work, would this topic be considered responsive to the current RFP? I believe so based on what I read, but just want to confirm. Thank you very much for your time.	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
	Would the budget allow for [REDACTED] purchased from those retailers? I noted that any research that studies cannabis will be considered, although our specific topic does not directly align with the listed priority areas. Briefly, our project focuses on [REDACTED] Given the scope of our work, would this topic be considered responsive to the current RFP? I believe so based on what I read, but just want to

	and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.	
4	I am writing with some questions for clarification on a couple of points related to the recent CFP. In particular, I plan to submit a project targeted to [REDACTED]. I strongly feel that in this proposal, this is a Subawardee rather than a Consultant, but would like to know more about the criteria for this designation. Are for-profit companies allowed as subawardees?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
5	**Question 1: Disease-Specific Mechanistic Research Eligibility** Our research proposal investigates [REDACTED] would a mechanistic study [REDACTED] be considered appropriate for this funding opportunity, particularly since our findings would have broader implications for [REDACTED]?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
6	Our research team is currently preparing a proposal for the 2025 DCC Academic Research Grant and would appreciate clarification on whether our planned work aligns with the Department's funding priorities. Our study will investigate [REDACTED].	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
7	Our study design includes REDACTED. Does the DCC encourage or prioritize comparisons that may disentangle cannabis-specific effects from disease-specific factors?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.

8	Would the Department find value in research that identifies [REDACTED]?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
9	I am writing to express my intent to submit a full proposal for the Cannabis Academic Research Grant, focusing on [REDACTED] This work directly addresses the Department's research priority of "deepening the understanding of how the human body processes and responds to different cannabinoids, including medicinal uses, health effects, and risks." We believe the findings will offer novel insights into how [REDACTED]. Before preparing the full proposal, I would appreciate it if you could clarify whether this research topic aligns with your division's current priorities, as well as the expected or allowable project duration and budget range for this funding opportunity.	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
10	Would the DCC consider funding an application that proposes to investigate [REDACTED]?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
11	We believe our study falls under Topic (1): Impacts on public health, including health costs associated with cannabis use, as well as whether	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant

	cannabis use is associated with an increase or decrease in use of alcohol or other drugs. 1. Would identifying [REDACTED] be considered within the scope of this funding opportunity?	believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
12	2. Would examining [REDACTED] fall under "health costs associated with cannabis use"?	The Department cannot provide predetermination of the eligibility of a proposal.
13	I would also like to know whether it is acceptable to work with licensed growers either as unfunded collaborators, or with funding through participant support, rather than subcontractors? In addition, if we are working with funders in this capacity, can we include a letter from the business, or some other indication that the grower has agreed to work with us?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
14	Will the DCC allow travel expenses on grants for the purpose of visiting California dispensaries or farms to conduct research in person? Travel expenses would include car rental, lodging and meals on the budget schedules released by the U.S. General Services Administration.	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific budget expenses prior to submission and scoring. However, as a general matter, travel expenses related to the research project are allowed.
15	Is it allowable to budget for project-related travel expenses (i.e., airfare, ground transportation, accommodations, meals, and incidentals) to conduct fieldwork (not for attending conferences) within California to examine conditions in different parts of the state?	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific budget expenses prior to submission and scoring. However, as a general matter, travel expenses related to the research project are allowed.
16	Is it allowable to budget for project- related out-of-state travel expenses to conduct fieldwork, for example, to collect primary data to make	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific budget expenses

	comparisons between the conditions in California and another state?	prior to submission and scoring. However, as a general matter, travel expenses related to the research project are allowed.
17	Is it allowable to budget for project-related international travel expenses to conduct fieldwork, for example, to collect primary data to make comparisons between the conditions in California and another country?	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific budget expenses prior to submission and scoring. However, as a general matter, travel expenses related to the research project are allowed.
18	Our team is interested in submitting an application. We are wondering if we can propose a start date of July 1, 2026 for a two-year project? This start date would allow us the time to wrap up our current DCC-funded cannabis research project, [REDACTED], and avoid any overlap should our proposal be funded and agreements executed sooner than that date. If this proposed July 1, 2026 start time is acceptable for our proposal, can you tell us if it would disadvantage our application to propose a delayed start time in terms of scoring?	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis based on the criteria outlined in Section 5 of the RFP and as described in title 4, section 17902, subsection (c), of the California Code of Regulations. Applicants selected to receive funding will be notified in early November at which time the Department will start the process to enter into the requisite agreement for authorizing payment of grant funds. Grant funds will only be distributed after execution of the agreement, and it is expected that selected applicants are prepared to commence the research project upon the distribution of grant funds to the university. The grant term for the project during which funds must be used is determined starting from the distribution date of the awarded funds.
19	Is it possible to propose staggered initiation/end dates for projects to harmonize with existing projects or other proposed projects? Is there a maximum delay/initiation date that can be proposed? (e.g. if the grant is granted in Oct 2025, could it start November 2026?)	Applicants selected to receive funding will be notified in early November at which time the Department will start the process to enter into the requisite agreement for authorizing payment of grant funds. Grant funds will only be distributed after execution of the agreement, and it is expected that

		selected applicants are prepared to commence the research project upon the distribution of grant funds to the university. The grant term for the project during which funds must be used is determined starting from the distribution date of the awarded funds.
20	I see that awards are anticipated in October and that funds may be spent upon execution of the agreement. My question is about whether the start date can be later? Our optimal funding period would be 3/1/26-2/28/28 or 7/1/26-6/30/28. Would that be allowed?	Applicants selected to receive funding will be notified in early November at which time the Department will start the process to enter into the requisite agreement for authorizing payment of grant funds. Grant funds will only be distributed after execution of the agreement, and it is expected that selected applicants are prepared to commence the research project upon the distribution of grant funds to the university. The grant term for the project during which funds must be used is determined starting from the distribution date of the awarded funds.
21	I'm interested in finding a cannabis researcher to work for in California. Is there anything through the DCC that links PIs who have cannabis research funds to those looking to join cannabis research groups? Or can you point me in the right direction? [REDACTED]	Grant funding is only available to public universities in California. The Department does not possess or maintain the requested information.
22	My lab develops web-scraping and classification tools to track online sellers, catalogue their product offerings, and assess compliance with relevant laws. Although our work to date has centered on tobacco, we consistently find that many tobacco sites also sell hemp-derived cannabinoids. This overlap raises	Grant funding is only available to public universities in California.

	several policy-relevant questions—for example, whether licensed cannabis retailers and unlicensed hemp-product vendors differ in: • Pricing • Tax compliance • Compliance to age-verification and other sales restrictions • Sell product of comparable cannabinoid potency and label accuracy (hence the interest in lab testing for verification) We already conduct state-wide purchase attempts—funded by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program (TRDRP)—to evaluate ageverification and delivery compliance among online sellers for tobacco products. Building on that TRDRP-supported infrastructure, we have also developed a validated workflow for matching retailers we identify against state licensing databases that we could expand to the state cannabis licensing database. Your answers will help me determine whether to proceed and how best to position the application. Thank you for your time.	
23	In terms of the specifics of the application form, there is 1 page provided in the form for the Scope of Work, but it states in the application materials that this document can be 4 pages. Instead of using the provided space in the form, is it acceptable to attach a 4-page Scope of Work?	Applicants may attach a separate Scope of Work to their application if they are unable to use the application document. The separate Scope of Work must comply with the criteria in the RFP.
24	I'm having a difficult time determining whether I'm exceeding the four pages in the scope of work (form DCC-2618), given the absence of any page breaks	Applicants may attach a separate Scope of Work to their application if they are unable to use the application

	or page numbers on the form. Could I submit a four-page PDF document in lieu of the form, or is there another version of form DCC-2618?	document. The separate Scope of Work must comply with the criteria in the RFP.
25	The [scoring] criteria explicitly states that proposals will be scored on, amongst other things, completeness of budget and related metrics. The specific question is does the budget amount weigh into the scoring criteria? In other words, is a project with a lesser budget more likely to be supported than a project with a higher budget, all else equal?	All information related to the scoring criteria is outlined in the RFP. At this time, we do not have any additional details to provide beyond what is included in the document.
26	Is there an example of the Institutional Cover Letter to be signed by the University's Authorized Official for us to use? If not, my Office of Research will develop this.	As indicated in the RFP, applicants can utilize the template State/University Proposal Cover Sheet located in the California Model Agreement Guide. Applicants can find the template at the following link: https://www.ucop.edu/research-policy-analysis-coordination/resources-tools/cma-guide/stateuniversity-proposal-cover-sheet.html. Alternatively, applicants can submit a cover sheet on university letterhead. Applicants must include a cover sheet to demonstrate approval by the University's authorized official for the proposed research.
27	IDC Rate: Per RFP instructions: page 8, G. Exhibits B and B1: Budget and Budget Justification: For the period from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026, the maximum allowable indirect cost rate for state funded projects is 35%. This rate applies to both grantees and subawardees; and page 17, section 14.E.: Subject to Exhibit D,	The Department will utilize the Indirect Cost Rate that is in effect at the time of execution of the grant agreement.

	the rate in effect for the first year of a multi-year project will be the rate used for the entire project. QUESTION: Please confirm whether we can apply 40% IDC after 7/1/2026 per UCOP IDC policy (https://www.ucop.edu/research-policy-analysis-coordination/policies-guidance/indirect-cost-recovery/state-of-california.html), or if we must remain at 35% IDC for the entire duration of project.	
28	May funds be used to purchase products (e.g., delta-8-THC or other cannabinoids) from online or brick-and-mortar retailers for compliance checks?	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific budget expenses prior to submission and scoring.
29	What is the expected start date of the project?	Applicants selected to receive funding will be notified in early November at which time the Department will start the process to enter into the requisite agreement for authorizing payment of grant funds. Grant funds will only be distributed after execution of the agreement, and it is expected that selected applicants are prepared to commence the research project upon the distribution of grant funds to the university. The grant term for the project during which funds must be used is determined starting from the distribution date of the awarded funds.
30	Is the NIH Other Support format adequate for the required Current and Pending Support documents?	Applicants must submit the provided exhibits included in the application package on the Department's website. Other documents will not be accepted in lieu of the required documents as outlined in the RFP, with the exception of the allowance of a separate Scope of Work as answered by the Department above.

31	Are there any minimum or maximum restrictions on the effort percentage for the PI and co-investigators?	No, there are not any restrictions on the effort percentage for the Principle Investigator and co-investigators.
32	Wanted to ask if this grant/RFP is open ONLY to public universities, or can Corporations who have extensive cannabis knowledge be also allowed to submit a proposal? Or even, Church Entities and non-profits.	Grant funding is only available to public universities in California.
33	Are we able to structure subawards as Time and Materials (T&M) contracts?	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific uses of subawards or subcontracting. Generally, there are no specific requirements or strict prohibitions on the use of subawards or subcontracts.
34	Can foreign consultants be included in the contracts? [REDACTED]	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific uses of subawards or subcontracting. Generally, there are no specific requirements or strict prohibitions on the use of subawards or subcontracts.
35	The website states that the upcoming deadline for grant proposals is July 25, but the RFP states that the deadline is August 8. Please indicate the correct deadline.	The final date for submission of applications is August 29, 2025. The Department has corrected the dates on its website
36	Does "cannabis" research under this announcement include [REDACTED]?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.

37	Are there any requirements regarding the page layout or margins of the Scope of Work document?	The Scope of Work is limited to a maximum of 4 pages, using no smaller than 12-point font. Applicants may utilize the Exhibit A – Scope of Work form in the application package on the Department's website or alternatively, may attach a separate Scope of Work that complies with the requirements as identified above and in the RFP.
38	Can the budget numbers be rounded to the nearest dollar? Or is it expected that the budget is calculated to the cent?	All budget items must be included in the proposal and budget costs are to be calculated to their exact amount.
39	Can figures and tables be included in the Scope of Work document?	Yes, this is acceptable.
40	Can the Scope of Work be attached separately to avoid formatting issues in the PDF text field form?	Yes, that is acceptable.
41	On page 16, UTC Section 15. Prior Approval Requirements and Budget Flexibility states "3) Notwithstanding 15.B.1, any amount of budgeted publication costs may be transferred to another approved Budget cost category." Is it allowable to budget for publication costs?	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific allowable expense or budget item. Generally, costs related to materials or publication related to research are allowed, however, applicants are encouraged to review the list of prohibited expenses located on Pages 8 and 9 of the RFP.
42	Just read about the funding for cannabis research. [REDACTED] I am proposing to write a [REDACTED]. It would have to be done in sections. It would produce [REDACTED]. It would frame [REDACTED]. Please let me know if such a [REDACTED] falls within the research framework.	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.
43	The RFP indicates priority consideration for projects that	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject

leverage resources and insights across state lines to build connections in the collective body of knowledge. Our research team is based entirely within California public universities, and we do not currently have formal cross-state collaborations established. Additionally, we are aware that **California Executive Orders restrict** state-funded travel to certain states. which could potentially limit conference participation or collaboration opportunities that might arise during the grant period. Could you clarify whether cross-state partnerships are required for competitive applications, or whether California-based teams conducting research with broader national implications would still receive full consideration? Furthermore, how do California travel restrictions affect expectations for dissemination activities or potential collaborations that might develop during the project timeline?

matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. If the applicant believes the project is responsive to an area of research identified in the RFP, the Department encourages the applicant to submit a proposal.

44 We have identified a discrepancy regarding the application submission deadline. Your website consistently states that applications are due by 11:59 p.m. on August 12, 2025, but we have encountered references to August 8 in other documentation. Could you confirm the correct deadline date for application submission? Additionally, since our research timeline and budget preparation depend on this date, we want to ensure we are working with accurate information for our final submission planning.

The final date for submission of applications is August 29, 2025. The Department has corrected the dates on its website.



45	Our proposal will have agreements to work with some growers, and would like to clarify if we need to provide letters from the growers or something to show they are interested in collaborating?	The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-by-case basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific uses of subawards or subcontracting. Generally, there are no specific requirements or strict prohibitions on the use of subawards or subcontracts. However, grant recipients shall not subcontract any portion of the research project funding without prior written consent from the Department.
46	We understand offering stipends for research participants are not prohibited. Are there limits on that or guidelines for amounts and/or how disbursement is handled?	It is recommended that applicants contact their universities regarding policies and guidelines for conducting research studies. The Department will evaluate each proposal on a case-bycase basis and is unable to provide a determination regarding specific budget items or expenses. Applicants are encouraged to review the list of prohibited expenses identified on pages 8 and 9 of the RFP. Grant funds will only be disbursed after the execution of the grant agreement between the selected applicant and the Department.
47	On the cross-state aspect, the RFP refers to leveraging "resources/insights across state lines" and states that the PI must be California-based, implying that some investigators may be out of state. We are planning on [REDACTED]. Can "work with" out-of-state "research entities" include those associated with private universities (e.g. Yale)? Can those outside entities be compensated, and, if so, what guidelines are there for amounts and how disbursement would be handled?	Grant funding is only available to public universities in California. There is no strict prohibition or specific requirements regarding the use of subawards or subcontractors, however the Department is unable to provide a determination regarding specific uses of subawards or subcontracting. Grant recipients shall not subcontract any portion of the research project funding without prior written consent from the Department. Grant funds will only be disbursed after the execution of the grant agreement between the selected applicant and the Department.

48	What guidelines are there for PI and other investigator compensation?	The Department does not establish or set any requirements regarding compensation. It is recommended that applicants contact their universities regarding policies and guidelines for conducting research studies.
49	On page 8 of the RFP, it lists "Travel prohibited under an Executive Order in effect during the project term" as an unallowable cost. What specifically is this referring to? Are there any currently in effect that we should be aware of?	Awarded projects may be subject to any restrictions imposed by an executive order issued by the Governor of California and in effect during the project's term. There are currently no Executive Orders in effect, however, should the Governor issue a travel ban, grantees will need to abide by those guidelines.
50	The RFP lists Tuesday, August 12, 2025 11:59 PM on page 4, but on page 9 under "4. Application Submission Process" Friday, August 8, 2025 11:59 PM is listed as the deadline to email all application material. Please clarify by which date we must email all application material: August 12 or August 8?	The final date for submission of applications is August 29, 2025. The Department has corrected the dates on its website.
51	Is it possible to extend the application window beyond August 12?	The Department may extend the application deadline at its discretion. Should an extension occur, the Department will notify all applicants and interested parties.
52	I am working on a DCC grant proposal that entails [REDACTED]. As part of the grant, I propose to interview legislative advocates of DCC's Advisory Committee and two DCC Deputy Directors [REDACTED] Does DCC have a policy prohibiting Directors and/or Advisory Committee members from participating in an interview for a DCC-funded project? If there is no such policy, would you	There are no strict requirements or prohibitions on participants in a proposed research project. However, Department staff cannot receive any grant funds under any circumstances. The Department is unable to provide assistance to any proposed applicant or on any proposed application prior to submission, scoring, and awarding of grant funds.

	[REDACTED] so that I can query them about their willingness to participate in an interview?	
53	Is it acceptable to propose a project as a stand-alone proposal and as part of a larger project, with the assumption that only one or the other would be funded?	The Department is unable to provide a determination regarding the subject matter of the proposed project prior to submission and scoring. Applicants may submit more than one proposal if the proposals are for separate and distinct research projects or activities. Additionally, applicants are instructed to discuss any alternative strategies to the proposed project in the Scope of Work.
54	Where can we add references to the scope of work in the proposal?	Applicants may include a separate bibliography/citation document, which includes a list of references and/or links to cited articles, if desired. However, this should not include added narrative or be used as a venue to expand beyond the four-page limit. The Department will only review and consider information contained within the Scope of Work.
55	If A3 is required, who would the "State Agency contact" be? You?	The Department was made aware of an additional exhibit located in the application package that was not identified in the RFP. The Exhibit A3 – Authorized Representatives was included in the application package in error. This exhibit is not required when applying and can be left out of submitted grant proposals. Please continue to refer to the RFP for all required application materials. The Department will update the application package on its website to remove the extra exhibit. No other

		and applicants who have already downloaded the application package do not need to do so again.
56	The complete fillable application document has more exhibit files in it than are mentioned in the RFP; for example, A3, A4, and A7 are in the application but not mentioned in the RFP; should we include if needed or extract the "extra" exhibit docs and only include what is mentioned in the RFP?	The Department was made aware of an additional exhibit located in the application package that was not identified in the RFP. The Exhibit A3 – Authorized Representatives was included in the application package in error. This exhibit is not required when applying and can be left out of submitted grant proposals. Please continue to refer to the RFP for all required application materials. The Department will update the application package on its website to remove the extra exhibit. No other changes to the application will be made and applicants who have already downloaded the application package do not need to do so again.
57	The Cover Sheet, form DCC-2617 references in the checklist the other required form, DCC-2618, but also lists attachment of forms DCC-2620 and DCC-2621, but the only versions I can find of these are from the 2022 RFP. Am I correct in assuming that the Budget and Key Personnel components of the new form DCC-2618 replace the former forms DCC-2620 and DCC-2621, and that these are now not required?	Applicants must use the Exhibit A2 – Key Personnel and Exhibit B – Budget forms in the application package in the proposal submissions. DCC-2620 and DCC-2621 are no longer in use. The Department was made aware of additional exhibits located in the application package that were not identified in the RFP. Applicants are only required to submit the exhibits outlined in the RFP. Applicants may include the additional exhibits if desired, but are not required to and applications will not be deemed incomplete if the additional exhibits are not included. Please continue to refer to the RFP for all required application materials.

		The Department will update the application package on its website to remove the extra exhibits. No other changes to the application will be made and applicants who have already downloaded the application package do not need to do so again.
58	Do you know if the state agency contacts listed in our prior grant application (attached) are the same contacts that should be listed in application to be submitted next month? If not, could you kindly provide them or indicate how I can identify them?	Applicants are only required to fill out the information pertaining to the public university. Contact information for the Department or related to the Department will be provided after scoring and awarding of grant funds during the contract process.
		The Department was made aware of additional exhibits located in the application package that were not identified in the RFP. Applicants are only required to submit the exhibits outlined in the RFP. Applicants may include the additional exhibits if desired but are not required to and applications will not be deemed incomplete if the additional exhibits are not included. Please continue to refer to the RFP for all required application materials.
		The Department will update the application package on its website to remove the extra exhibits. No other changes to the application will be made and applicants who have already downloaded the application package do not need to do so again

The Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) licenses and regulates commercial cannabis activity within California. To learn more about the California cannabis market, state licenses or laws, visit <u>cannabis.ca.gov</u>. Email questions to <u>info@cannabis.ca.gov</u> or call 1-844-61-CA-DCC (1-844-612-2322).

