



Request for Proposals

Primals Research Student Awards

A Project of the University of Pennsylvania and the Templeton Religion Trust

Issue Date: March 28, 2022

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Primals Research Student Awards is a funding opportunity for PhD/post-doc students seeking up to \$20,000 in research funds to study primal world beliefs, such as the beliefs the world is dangerous or interesting. 2-page submissions due 5/27/22.

DESCRIPTION

Primals—also called “primal world beliefs”—are basic perceptions of the world’s general character. A foundational taxonomic effort recently sought to empirically determine the dimensionality of primals after gathering candidate primals across Twitter, historical texts, and other sources (Clifton et al., 2019; <https://tinyurl.com/y4m62r7k>). This effort identified 26 hierarchically arranged primal world belief dimensions (some novel) that are normally distributed, stable over time, orthogonal to most demographics, yet strongly correlated to many personality and wellbeing variables. Further, most variation is explained by three higher-order primals: the beliefs the world is overall *Safe* (vs. dangerous), *Enticing* (vs. dull), and *Alive* (vs. mechanistic). The origins and psychological impact of these beliefs are not well understood.

The Primals Project at the University of Pennsylvania Positive Psychology Center, with support from the Templeton Religion Trust, is pleased to announce the *Primals Research Student Awards* for PhD students and post-doctoral trainees only. Our main goal is to promote new empirical research exploring how primals are formed, maintained, change, or influence nontrivial outcomes or psychological processes. Our second goal is to encourage student 1st author publications in top-tier peer-viewed journals. We seek research that is interesting, catalytic, methodologically rigorous, economical, and publication-oriented.

Multiple awards up to \$20,000 will be disbursed to awardee institutions during the 12 months between Sept. 1, 2022 and Aug. 31, 2023. By the end of that time, Awardees must submit a 500-word report describing completed research, preliminary findings, and publication plans/timeline. One Awardee will then be selected to participate in an expenses-paid, invitation-only conference with leading primals researchers from around the world. Proposals are welcome from any psychology subdiscipline (clinical, personality, etc.) and any other discipline (philosophy, history, etc.) as long as research is empirical and the focus is one or more primals. Awardees will be selected by the Steering Committee: Dr. Jeremy Clifton (chair; Penn), Dr. Alia Crum (Stanford), Dr. Nicholas Kerry (Penn), Dr. Crystal Park (University of Connecticut), and Dr. Martin Seligman (Penn). Two-page submissions are due May 27, 2022, with notification of acceptance/rejection in July, 2022. Decisions will not be explained.

ELIGIBILITY

Principal Investigators must be either students enrolled in a degree-granting PhD program or hold a postdoctoral research position at an accredited college or university at any time between

Sept. 1, 2022 and Aug. 31, 2023. To access awarded funds, an institutional affiliation must be active (funds will be disbursed through awardee institution). Eligibility exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, especially for methodologically advanced master's students. The contest is not open to contracted faculty. The competition is international. Only one proposal allowed per Principal Investigator. The Steering Committee reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, waive or penalize irregularities, and/or negotiate separately the terms and conditions of all or any part of submissions, as determined to be in the best interest of the Primals Project.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please email application materials as PDF attachments to Rive Cadwallader, Primals Project Manager (rcad@sas.upenn.edu) by 11:59 PM EST Friday, May 27, 2022. Submissions should include a) the Principal Investigator's CV and b) a document (1-inch margins, single spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font) with the following information:

- 1) *Project Title* (appropriate to an eventual journal submission)
- 2) *Principle Investigator*: Name, eligibility status (PhD student or post-doc), institution, contact information.
- 3) *Advisor*: Name, title, institution, contact information.
- 4) *Big Idea/Translational Abstract* (max: 150 words): What is the big idea that animates your interest in primals and how will your work address it?
- 5) *Activities* (max: 500 words): Noting illuminating details, summarize hypotheses, intended activities, studies, methodologies, samples, and publication plans. Possible journal outlets and general intentions for submission timeframes should be briefly mentioned and appropriate to study plans.
- 6) *Budget*: Indicate how funds will be used. List 1-8 estimated expenses in a 3-column table (type of expense, amount, and brief explanation). Requests should not exceed \$20,000. Personnel costs (salary and/or benefits) and indirect costs (institutional overhead) are not permitted. Budget amounts must be in U.S. dollars. Please enter whole dollar amounts.
- 7) *Potential* (max: 150 words): If awarded and completed, how might your project lead to exciting research programs exploring primal world beliefs?
- 8) *Researcher Fit* (max: 150 words): Highlighting key aspects of your CV, introduce yourself and your fitness to conduct the research, including methodological expertise.
- 9) *Advisor Engagement* (max: 100 words): Applicants must discuss proposed research with advisors before submission. Please describe the extent of your discussions, indicate if feedback was given/incorporated, and whether you expect advisory approval/support for your efforts if funded. The Primals Project may contact some advisors for verification.
- 10) *References*: Please list all cited references in APA format (7th edition).

Proposals cannot exceed 2 pages even if all element-specific word count limits are followed. References, however, may extend to a third page.

CONTACT

Please send all inquiries to Rive Cadwallader, Primals Project Manager, at rcad@sas.upenn.edu. Applicants are welcome to seek preliminary feedback on briefly-stated project ideas before submission, though we may lack capacity to respond to all such requests, especially immediately before submissions are due. If lacking access to primals research articles, please inquire.