

UTRF Technology Maturation Award

Application Overview

This is not an official application form. To apply for the UTRF Technology Maturation Award please download and complete the UTRF Technology Maturation Award Proposal form. Other forms of submission will not be accepted.

Proposals are due to your designated campus research office by 5:00 p.m., October 31, 2026.

Below is an outline of the questions asked on the official form, as well as a list of items to consider while answering each question.

1) Project Description

a) What problem is the proposed technology trying to solve and how is the problem currently being addressed?

Things to Consider:

- How does the proposed technology compare to the state of art? What is lacking with other related technologies?
- What is the competition for this technology?
- What customer needs does the technology seek to satisfy?

b) What potential markets, applications, and licensees do you envision for the proposed technology?

Things to Consider:

- Will it be feasible for a company to change what they are currently doing?
- What barriers to entry do you think the proposed technology might face?
- In your opinion which companies would be potential licensees and why?
- Have you already interacted with any companies on this technology?
- Have you engaged in any customer discovery?

2) Specific Aims

a) What is the technology's current state?

What is the current level of development or stage of the invention?

b) Describe the work that will be done and provide a timeline with milestones for completion.

Things to Consider:

- What are the license-enabling milestones you expect to achieve this year?
- What data is needed to make it marketable?
- What have you done thus far to improve the technology's commercial potential?
- Will the funding address one of the potential licensee concerns?

3) Outcome and Impact

Things to Consider:

- Describe the anticipated outcome.
- How it will further the UTRF's ability to commercialize the proposed technology?
- What are the identifiable GO/NO GO endpoints?

4) Budget and Budget Justification

Things to Consider:

- Funds should be directed to labor, materials, and services necessary to achieve the proposed deliverable(s). Indirect costs are not allowed.
- Funds may not be used for PI salary but may be used for student, post doc, or technical staff support.

Application Guidelines

Guidelines & Proposal Requirements

- Open to all UT researchers, faculty, staff and students at all campuses and institutes.
- Projects must be related to an existing UT invention disclosure, OR a proposal can be accompanied by a new UT invention/creation disclosure: idea.tennessee.edu
- All proposals should clearly respond to the four questions.
- Proposals that only generate basic research results should not be submitted.
- Please complete the UTRF Technology Maturation Grant Proposal form.
- The proposal should not exceed 2 pages, excluding references and figures, which may each be included as a 1-page appendix. Half a page is allotted for each main question on the form. Therefore, the proposal plus the appendices must not exceed 4 pages.
- The proposal should be received by the campus-specific research office (through CayuseSP/Evisions) by 5:00 p.m., October 31, 2026.

Judging Criteria

A panel of technical and business experts from inside and outside of the university will rank-order projects based on the following criteria:

- Demonstration of a path for commercial development
- Market potential
- Stage of development

Examples of Eligible Projects

- Establishment of application or proof-of-concept
- Prototype development
- Addressing specific questions or suggested improvements from potential licensees
- Meaningfully improving intellectual property related to a technology