ConTex Information for UT Austin Applicants

Collaborative Research Grants

What is the ConTex Collaborative Research Grants Program?
ConTex Collaborative Research Grants aim to provide seed funding for internationally competitive and innovative collaborations between researchers from The University of Texas (UT) System and Mexican research centers and institutions of higher education. Each project must include at least one Principal Investigator from the UT System and one from Mexico. Research must contribute to the economic development and welfare of Mexico and Texas. ConTex awards grants of up to $100,000 USD for twelve months to projects that show potential to leverage additional extramural funding to foster permanent ties between the UT System and Mexican institutions.

How are awardees selected?
Following submission, ConTex conducts an administrative and academic review and ranking of proposals. Each project is evaluated and rated by faculty members and/or researchers from Mexico and the United States with expertise in the relevant topics.

Proposals are assessed according to the following main criteria for intellectual merit and impact:

- Quality of proposal
- Experience and expertise of each Principal Investigator (PI)
- Balance and efficiency of proposed budget
- Potential impact of research on the economic development and welfare of Texas and Mexico

Should the budget for student expenses be split depending on student origin (i.e. expenses for Mexican students working in Mexico or at UT Austin should appear under the Mexican budget) or student work destination regardless of origin (i.e. expenses for Mexican students working at UT Austin should appear under the UT Austin budget)?
Please review current ConTex application guidelines or contact the ConTex team for more information. In the past there has been no preferred method. You may look at which way does more to balance out the budgets between the two institutions, or the way that makes more sense to the PIs. If in doubt, contact the ConTex team for advice.

What type of expenses are allowed?
For a full list of allowable and unallowable expenses, visit the Call for Proposals page.

What type of expenses are NOT allowed?
For a full list of allowable and unallowable expenses, visit the Call for Proposals page.
Are postdoctoral stipends an eligible budget expense under this grant?  
Postdoctoral stipends or salaries are eligible expenses. However, faculty applying for a collaborative research grant may encourage postdocs to submit a separate application for a ConTex Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, naming the PI as a sponsor/mentor.

What is the visa process for this grant and for other ConTex grant programs?  
Please visit the International Office website or send an email message to intlfinaid@austin.utexas.edu for immigration related questions.

How will I be able to access my funds after the award has been announced?  
Once the PI’s department is informed of the award, the PI’s accounting contact must submit to the Office of Accounting, a request for a new 20-account (the award letter must accompany this request). A memorandum of understanding will be initiated by ConTex, and after receiving endorsement from UT Austin and UT System, funds will be disbursed to the Office of Accounting for distribution to PI accounts. Please consult with your departmental accounting contact or the Office of the VP for Research for more information. Guidance on personnel appointments may be directed to your Human Resources Representative.

How can departments assist with processing collaborative grant awards?  
Once departments are notified of an award, they must submit a new 20-account (budget group) request to the Office of Accounting. Instructions can be found on the Financial and Administrative Services website. The award letter must be submitted as backup to this request.

Postdoctoral Fellowships and Collaborative Research Grant funding is distributed by the Budget Office in partnership with the Office of the VP for Research. For more information on disbursement of funds, contact: Office of the VP for Research.

Will feedback about my proposal be available if I don’t get the award?  
Reviewer comments will be provided to PIs upon request to ConTex after awards are announced.

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Which fields are covered by this ConTex fellowship?  
Please visit ConTex to review the most recent call for nominations and deadlines, and for a full description of study areas covered.

What is the application process?  
Postdocs must contact a prospective faculty member or researcher at UT Austin to request permission to work in his/her lab or area. A list of faculty members and
research staff can be found under each respective area of study: https://www.utexas.edu/academics/areas-of-study.

For additional information and the call for proposals, visit the ConTex website.

**How will I get paid?**
At the time of award, the ConTex Office will work with the VP for Research Office to request approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU authorizes the transfer of award funds to UT Austin. Once your department or mentor is informed of the award, an account will be created from which to pay you. Please contact your faculty/researcher sponsor first, if you have any questions. For additional support, contact the ConTex Office for guidance or your Human Resources Representative.

**How can departments assist with processing postdoc fellowships?**

1. Once ConTex informs the postdoc's department head or postdoc supervisor of the award, departments must submit a new 20-account (budget group) request to the Office of Accounting:
   - Form type: Education and General
   - Type of account: 20 AUF
   - Sub-accounts: 70 Schol/Fellow (to pay the stipend); 73 Other (to pay Health Insurance)
   - Instructions can be found on the Financial and Administrative Services website.

2. ConTex will pay all pooled fringe benefits as an allowable expense negotiated for UT Austin fellowships. The supervising department and mentor may choose either of the following options as applicable and in compliance with visa restrictions:
   a. Process the postdoctoral fellow appointment as a stipend using the University Affiliate Postdoctoral Fellow title (job code A010).
      - The stipend is then processed from the 70-subaccount as a scholarship/fellowship payment
      - The Postdoc’s health benefit can be reimbursed separately. Health insurance expenses may be covered from the 73-subaccount (postdoc must provide proof of payment). The postdoc may purchase insurance from the open market or from UT. Information about UT’s health insurance benefits can be found on the Human Resources website.
      - Procedures for Research Titles can be found on the Office of the VP for Research Policy website.
   b. Process the postdoctoral fellow as an employee (job code .
      - Pooled fringe benefits are an allowable expense.
Doctoral Fellowships

What is a ConTex Doctoral Fellowship?
ConTex-COACNYT doctoral fellowships give aspiring researchers the opportunity to make new discoveries and scientific breakthroughs while working with world-class faculty. Students from Mexico will receive financial support to attend one of the 14 University of Texas System institutions to study with top researchers, while preparing for entry into a global workforce.

For the most updated version of Doctoral Fellowship criteria, please visit the ConTex funding website. Through this fellowship, students from Mexico receive financial support to study at any of the University of Texas System institutions. Fellows receive financial support for up to 5 years of doctoral study at a University of Texas institution.

Is there a specific number of fellowships assigned to each UT system institution?
All UT System institutions share the total allocation of ConTex awards.

What criteria will be applied for the award of fellowships?
In order to win a ConTex Fellowship, students must:

1. Register on the ConTex website;
2. Apply to one or more Ph.D. programs at UT System institutions and be admitted;
3. Apply directly to CONACYT for a foreign study scholarship (becas al extranjero).

Is the award made on a first come-first served basis?
No; this is a competitive process with an annual deadline for applications.

How are funds managed?
After an MOU is signed by UT Austin (Business Contracts Office) and UT System, CONACYT transfers funding to the ConTex office to distribute to awarded UT System Institutions. The International Office processes all student disbursements. Postdoctoral and Collaborative research grant funds are transferred to the host department after a 20-account has been created to receive the funds.

Will students have pre-approved funding at the time of application submission to UT Austin?
No, but past experience shows that students who are accepted by a UT Austin graduate program, AND who register early with ConTex, AND successfully navigate the CONACYT application process typically receive an award.
Is this fellowship available to Mexican-born students who have also have permanent residency status in the U.S., or multiple citizenship status including Mexican?
Yes. Mexican citizenship credentials will be required by CONACYT when applying to their scholarships. Students are also advised to contact the International Office Student and Scholar Services Office early in the process to review status requirements at UT.

Is this fellowship available to undocumented students? (i.e. DREAMers)
Because Mexican students are required to return to Mexico to complete documentation required for this fellowship, application may be difficult for DREAMers.

Students are encouraged to contact International Texas Resident Team at Financial Aid with individual financial aid questions/concerns. The International Texas Resident Team consists of Financial Aid Officers who work with undocumented students.

International Texas Resident Team
InterTX@austin.utexas.edu
(512)475-6282

Is there a blanket tuition waiver in place for all ConTex supported students?
In-state tuition will be granted to students who are awarded the ConTex fellowship.

How will the UT admissions office find out if the student receives the fellowship?
It is the student’s responsibility to advise the appropriate respective institutional financial office regarding their fellowship award. The ConTex Office will facilitate this process; contact them for further assistance.

Is there a deadline to apply for the fellowship?
Yes; please visit ConTex to review the most recent call for nominations and deadlines.

What is the ConTex fellowship application process?
Information and application instructions can be found on the ConTex website.

Will the UT Austin Admissions Office (or admitting department) need to instruct the student on how to apply for the fellowship? How will students know about the program?
ConTex is available to assist students through the application process. Students in Mexico are informed of this funding opportunity via a wide-spread advertising campaign in Mexico, via social media and other outlets.

Will (English) language training be provided?
No; Mexican students are expected to be proficient in English and meet all other admission requirements. Language instruction is not included in this fellowship program.

Note: the International Office offers further information about ESL cost-based services at: http://world.utexas.edu/esl/programs

**Does the ConTex program include fellowship support for masters-level students?**
Not at the moment, but this might be considered for future programs.

**Does the ConTex program support existing PhD students or only new applicants to a PhD program?**
It supports both existing and new, under the same guidelines.

**Does the ConTex program support doctoral study in the Fine Arts?**
Eligibility requirements vary year-to-year. Please visit ConTex to review the most recent call for nominations and guidelines.

**Does the ConTex program only support STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) disciplines?**
No. It also supports the social sciences and Humanities. Contact the ConTex Office for clarification on a specific program or field of study.

**How will I get paid?**
All PhD fellowships are processed by the International Office. Questions about this can be addressed to: intlfinaid@austin.utexas.edu or the ConTex Office.