

# Proposal Review Process

Concrete Research Council – Annual RFP

# Introduction



The MISSION of the **ACI Foundation** is to **make strategic investments in ideas, research and people to create the future of the concrete industry.**

Our Main Programs:

- ❑ **Concrete Innovation Council** (CIC) - technology & innovation
- ❑ **Concrete Research Council** (CRC) – research
- ❑ **Scholarship Council** (SC) – people/future leaders

**CRC's objective** is to seek concrete research projects that further the knowledge and sustainability of concrete materials, construction, and structures in coordination with ACI Technical Committees.

# Levels of Review

## **ACI Foundation & ACI Engineering Staff**

- confirms proposals meet all requirements
- research priority to ACI (high, medium, low)

## **ACI Reviewers (minimum of 3 per proposal)**

- Judge proposals for each evaluation criteria

## **CRC Review Co-Chairs (2 per category)**

- Assess all reviews and supporting documentation

## **CRC Volunteers (full roster)**

- Confirm proposal ranking recommended by Co-Chairs

# Confidentiality & Conflict of Interest



All **Council Volunteers** sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest (COI) policy annually.

All **Proposal Reviewers** sign a confidentiality and COI policy.

A **conflict of interest** is defined as a research application (*or any other award of funds or payment for services*) where the CRC, CIC or ACI reviewer:

- is a relative of the potential recipient,
  
- has a current, or is considering a future, business or financial relationship with the submitting organization/institution, potential recipient, or with a family member of the potential recipient, or
  
- is currently employed or enrolled, was previously employed or enrolled within the last 12 months, is being considered for employment, or is serving on governing committees at the submitting organization/institution.

# Disclosure & Recusal

If a **conflict of interest exists**, the reviewer must:

- Recuse** themselves from all deliberations on the proposal being considered for funding or other similar matters including payment for services.
- Not be eligible to vote** on that proposal, funding, or payments for services with whom the council member has a conflict.
- Avoid any actions that are intended to influence** other council members to vote in favor of the proposal.

# Evaluation Criteria

- 1. Relevancy and Potential Impact of Research (10-point weight):** Is there potential for this research to advance ACI standards, advance the state of the science of the concrete industry, improve current industry products or systems, or provide thrust into new markets? Is it innovative?
- 2. Supplemental Support (5-point weight):** Are there significant co-funding sources identified for the proposed research and/or what is the potential for additional external funding beyond the proposed research?
- 3. Overall Quality (5-point weight):** Are the objectives and scope clearly identified? Is there a research plan and a budget? Can the research plan be accomplished within the budget? Is the proposal well written?
- 4. Researcher Capability (5-point weight):** Are the researchers experienced on the subject matter? Are there suitable facilities and equipment available to perform the proposed work? If principal investigators have received previous funding from the CRC, their past performance regarding timely communications and meeting established milestones & deliverables will also be considered.
- 5. ACI Committee Engagement (5-point weight):** Will the committee form a task group and identify a 'champion' to serve in an advisory capacity to the PI? Will the committee dedicate meeting time to hear status reports and discuss implementation of the results?

# Evaluation Details

- ❑ **ACI Foundation Staff** confirms that the proposals meet all requirements, including a valid endorsement from at least one ACI Technical Committee. If a PI has led previously funded research, Staff notes the performance of the PI: Were status reports received on time? Did the PI keep the endorsing committee and advisory council informed? Was the final report submitted?
- ❑ **ACI Engineering Staff** reviews the executive summary of each proposal and assesses the relevance of the proposal to ACI's strategies, programs, products, and services. Would the proposed research provide information not available from other sources. Each proposal is given an overall 'priority' to ACI of high, medium or low.
- ❑ **ACI Reviewers** provide a technical review of assigned proposals, assigning a score of 1 to 5 (*5 being best*) for each of the evaluation criteria. A minimum of three reviews are conducted on each proposal. Reviewers are ACI members that have expertise in materials or structural research. All reviewers review and agree to the ACI Foundation's confidentiality & conflict of interest policy.

# Collating Scores & Comments

**CRC Review Co-Chairs** – two CRC Members are assigned to each proposal category of Materials and Structures. The duty of Co-Chair rotates through the CRC roster. Co-Chairs provide a proposed ranking of all the proposals for each category by assessing the review information:

- ❑ PI's past performance (*if applicable*)
- ❑ Importance to ACI (high, medium, low)
- ❑ Scores and comments from ACI Reviewers (*minimum of 3 reviews per proposal, highest possible score is 150*)
- ❑ Support & comments from the endorsing ACI Technical Committee

**NOTE:** If a Co-Chair has a COI with a proposal, the CRC Chair and/or CRC Vice Chair provide a review in their place.

# Additional Considerations

**CRC Review Co-Chairs** also review each proposal for the following:

**Status of PI** – Is the PI an **Assistant Professor** or **Assistant/Junior Researcher**? *To promote and further develop future generations of concrete researchers, the expectation of the CRC is to award at least 1 research contract to an Assistant Professor/Researcher in each category (both Materials and Structures).*

**Industry Impact** – Does the proposal have **direct** impact by providing products that directly support the industry, or **indirect** impact by producing products eventually targeted for industry through the work of ACI codes, guides, standards or published reports. *The CRC is encouraged to award 1 research contract in this category if the Co-Chairs can justify that it is a critical industry issue and that the proposed research will develop the necessary products to resolve the issue.*

**Leveraged Funding** - Although not required by the CRC, co-funding of projects can lead to more significant research products with greater impact to ACI and the concrete industry. Co-Chairs are instructed to **consider leveraged co-funding** of proposals in the context of if the work will produce more significant products and resulting impacts.

# Final Rank & Funding



## **Concrete Research Council**

The **CRC Review Co-Chairs** provide the ranking for the top 10 proposals in each research category. Proposals are available for the full CRC roster to review prior to the spring ACI Concrete Convention. During a closed meeting, the CRC discusses the proposals, scores, comments and agrees on a final rank for each category.

## **ACI Foundation Trustees**

The Trustees review the recommended proposals and provide final approval to fund.

## **ACI Foundation Staff**

Notifies all PIs of the review outcome and works with the PIs and their contracts offices to execute a research contract with milestones & deliverables that are tied to payments for each funded project.