

## UNM Main Campus Limited Competition Announcement

Dear UNM Researchers,

The Office of the Vice President for Research is requesting statements of interest and pre-proposals for the **ASCEND<sup>R</sup>** limited competition. The **ASCEND<sup>R</sup> Research Program** is a competitive, faculty-led program designed to advance research aligned with the U.S. Department of Defense's (DOD) science and technology priorities. This research program aims to (1) expose both faculty and students to military operations and defense and national security real-world challenges, (2) deploy and enhance the research environments conducive for the successful progression and participation of the students in the process (e.g. mentoring, professional development, and financial support), and to (3) conduct research and deliver research outcomes to meet DOD technical challenges/gaps. The program supports the development of innovative solutions in key technical areas and fosters deeper collaboration between academic researchers and the defense enterprise. For this opportunity, **research priority areas are: Advanced Materials, Human-Machine Interfaces, and Space Technology.**

**Sponsor:** HSRU

**Sponsor Due Date(s):** 02/27/2026

**Award Range:** up to \$200,000

**Number of Submissions Allowed from UNM:** Two (2)

**Sponsor Guidelines:** <https://www.hsr.u.org/initiatives/ascendr/research>

**Relevant Information:**

- Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s) must be an early- to mid-career Research Faculty member or Tenure/Tenure Track Faculty member, defined as within the first 8 years of their professional career.
- The Principal Investigator must hire and integrate at least one Graduate Research Assistant for this project. The graduate assistant must be enrolled at the start of the project and maintain enrollment eligibility throughout the proposed project.
- All PIs, Co-PIs, and the graduate assistant working on this project must be U.S. citizens or naturalized citizens.
- The Principal Investigator and Co-PIs must agree to jointly participate in the [ASCEND<sup>R</sup> Leadership Program](#).

**We strongly recommend that interested PIs attend [this informational webinar](#) on December 9, 2025.**

**Limited Comp. Instructions:** We will be conducting a two-step internal competition to ensure we have a review committee in place by the pre-proposal deadline. You must complete both steps if you are interested in participating.

**Limited Comp. STEP 1: Required SOI Due Date:** **NOON on December 10, 2025** (for planning purposes)

**Limited Comp. STEP 2: Pre-proposal Due Date:** **NOON on January 8, 2026**

**STEP ONE:** Please submit your ~100-word **statement of interest** in UNM's [InfoReady Review portal](#). This is a required step, and no late submissions will be considered. Note that SOIs will NOT be scored; we require them to assist us in forming a review committee.

**STEP TWO:** Please submit your 3-page pre-proposal, abbreviated budget, and CVs or biosketches for key personnel via UNM's [InfoReady Review portal](#). You will receive an email when the InfoReady

competition has been converted from the SOI application to the pre-proposal application, but you may work on your documents outside the system before that. No late submissions will be considered.

**The 3-page preproposal should address the major points that will be included in the application:**

- I. Strategic Alignment and Significance: Briefly explain how your research addresses DOD technical priorities and ASCEND<sup>R</sup> goals, and its relevance to national defense and critical technology areas.
- II. Innovation and Technical Merit: Summarize what's new and rigorous about your approach, how it advances the field, and the expected impact within one year.
- III. Graduate Student Engagement and Mentorship: Describe graduate student roles and mentorship, showing how their involvement supports STEM workforce development.
- IV. Project Feasibility, Collaboration, and Budget Justification: Outline your plan of work, timeline, and budget rationale. Highlight collaboration and how the scope fits project objectives.
- V. Commitment to ASCEND<sup>R</sup> Leadership Program: Affirm your commitment to the ASCEND<sup>R</sup> Leadership Program and interest in DOD-focused professional development.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact [limited@unm.edu](mailto:limited@unm.edu).