



Exeter – UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership

Catalyst Grant Guidelines for Applicants:

Background

Exeter and UBC Okanagan (UBCO) have developed a growing number of collaborations advancing mutual interests in teaching, research, and public service through formal agreements and joint funding mechanisms dating back to 2017. The next phase of collaborative engagement will be focused on some of our shared strategic priorities. The partnership will operate under the banner of the **Exeter – UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership**.

Both Universities are home to world-leading academics taking interdisciplinary approaches to tackle the major challenges of our age; building resilience and looking for solutions to the challenges presented by climate, environmental, and social changes. The Exeter – UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership aims to generate exceptional research and teaching; to connect our talented researchers, educators, and higher education professionals in efforts to solve problems particular to our regional contexts. The approach will recognise the excellent foundations and existing linkages shared between Exeter and UBCO faculty, and give fresh focus through 3 Key Thematic focus areas:

- 1. Adaption to Climate and Ecological Change:** Bringing together expertise from engineers, climate scientists, ecologists, environmental humanities, and policymakers to explore solutions to the climate crisis and build resilience in our communities.
- 2. Innovative Health Initiatives:** Encouraging interdisciplinary approaches that impact positively on human health & performance, focusing on the needs of our regional communities, building outstanding health education together, and catalysing new research.
- 3. Enhancing Social Justice:** Combining the unique perspectives of Exeter and UBCO staff to lead progress to create a fairer, socially just, and inclusive society. We will seek to work in partnership with our local communities to structure our research, creative, and education initiatives together, delivering positive impact for the places where we are situated.

Through the **Initiator Grant** and **Catalyst Grant** opportunities we aim to support faculty in:

- Increasing the impact of their research or education activities domestically and internationally.
- The development of novel, interdisciplinary research and/or teaching and learning concepts to the point of implementation and submission of bid(s) for external funding.
- Developing initiatives to the point of achieving high impact / high influence publications or equivalent.

The 2026/2027 **Catalyst Grants** are now open for applications, with a closing date of **3rd June 2026**.

Objectives

Following on from previous rounds of partnership development funding, awards of Fellowships and Project grants, **Catalyst Grants** are intended to support larger scale initiatives with the aim of securing



external funding and/or producing high level outputs and impact. It is anticipated that academic faculty / staff at both Universities, with excellent and complementary expertise and capability, will have already established a working relationship and track record that can be demonstrated as part of the application.

In summary, the **key aims of the Catalyst Grants** are:

- To position the project group to win major external funding, publish significant research, and/or to influence national/international policy.
- To address research questions and/or to develop innovative teaching and learning initiatives with potential for high impact that could not be as effectively carried out by a partner on its own.
- To facilitate further development of novel research and/or teaching and learning concepts to the point of submission of bid(s) for significant external funding.
- To expedite ground-breaking interdisciplinary research and/or teaching and learning initiatives, taking them to the next level.

Funding Details

Applications up to a maximum **GBP 16,000 / CAD \$27,500** are invited.

Awardees will have until the end of July 2027 to utilize the funds for the project or initiative. Funds that are not utilized within the specified period will be returned to the source.

Funding can be divided between the two institutions in the currency of their home institution. The amount provided to each PI would follow the Sub-Totals outlined in the Application Form, Section 8 (cost). Funded applications will be promoted via the websites of each University.

Eligibility Criteria

The Catalyst Grants will be available to the whole academic community at Exeter and UBCO. Holding a previous Fellowship or Project Grant is not a requirement. Eligible costs include:

- travel and subsistence
- research consumables
- external speakers/facilitators
- meeting, venue and catering costs
- costs of non-academic (research, or technical) staff time (in the UK these are called directly incurred staff costs). Where funding is requested for research or technical posts that are also partially funded by another grant / source of funding, please check the terms and conditions of any pre-existing contract to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.

The following items are not eligible for funding under this scheme:

- academic salaries
- third-party travel costs
- equipment
- publication costs
- student fees / tuition
- indirect costs, estates/capital costs and overheads associated with internal research facilities.



Application Process

Applicants will need to complete the Catalyst Grant application form in conjunction with their counterpart(s) at the partner institution. Both a lead applicant and co-applicant at the partner institution will need to be nominated for each application. Up to two additional applicants may be identified.

Applicants should ensure that activities are planned and scheduled so that in the event of an award, activities can be undertaken soon after. We expect projects to be completed within the stated timeframes.

Identical copies of the application should be submitted to both institutions at the below email addresses by **3rd June 2026 (11:59pm, local time of lead applicant)**.

Exeter: GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk

UBCO: vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca

Applications will be jointly assessed by a panel of senior administrator and key academic leads for the partnership. Lead applicants will be notified within the specified timeframe (see Key Dates).

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed via a competitive selection process based on the following criteria:

- Strategic fit.
- Quality of initiative / activity plan as outlined in the application with considerations for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Potential to produce tangible outputs and benefits.
- Potential to leverage external funding.
- Potential for generating non-academic benefits and impact.
- Perceived value from investment.
- Potential to expand upon existing or newly identified collaboration.
- Contribution to advancing and sustaining the UBCO – Exeter partnership.

Feedback and Submissions

Feedback is not usually provided for Catalyst Grant applications. Resubmission is by invitation only.

Key Dates

Date	Activity
2 April 2026	Calls for applications issued
3 June 2026	Application deadline
Late July 2026	Applicants notified of outcome
15 August 2026	Earliest project start date
31 July 2027	Project completion deadline
31 August 2027	Post-project report submission deadline



Grant acquittal and reporting

Awardees must agree to adhere to all requirements related to the receipt of funding including deadlines and procedures for acquittal of funds and reporting on outcomes.

Awardees will have up to July 31, 2027, to utilize the funds for the project or initiative. Funds that are not utilized within the specified period will be withdrawn.

Within 1 month of project completion, awardees will be required to submit a brief report outlining the successes and outcomes of the project. Report forms will be provided to Project Leads.

This report will be utilised for the follow up of potential opportunities, reporting on outcomes and to highlight successes of the initiative between UBCO & Exeter.

Awardees who embark on international travel are required to abide by official reporting, insurance and registration requirements as outlined in:

UBCO policies: <https://finance.ubc.ca/expenditure-guidelines-0/travel-expenditures>

Exeter policies:

<https://universityofexeteruk.sharepoint.com/sites/Travel/SitePages/Booking-your-Travel.aspx>

Contacts

Please consult your home institution contacts if you would like any additional information.

Exeter: Stuart Westhead (Global Partnerships Regional Head – North America & Europe)
S.westhead@exeter.ac.uk; Global Partnerships Team GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk

UBCO: Pierre Rondier (Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Operations) pierre.rondier@ubc.ca;
Nicole Bennett (Internal Programs Manager, VPRI Office) nicole.bennett@ubc.ca



Annex A

Assessment Criteria

This guidance has been drawn up to assist applicants when completing their Catalyst Grant application forms. The purpose is to explain what type of information and evidence is required to satisfy the assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria	Evidence Required
Strategic fit	Clear information on how the proposed project would enhance the development of one of the established themes and, if applicable, subthemes.
Quality of initiative/activity	<p>How well the application has been considered and planned, and the strength of its potential for taking forward a development or collaboration. Are the goals stretching but achievable? Using data to substantiate, the bid should identify the need for and value of the proposed project and how this fits with UoE and UBCO objectives. Include supporting details on how the project would be significantly enhanced by being undertaken through this initiative.</p> <p>Considerations for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concrete actions to address equity, diversity and inclusion at stage of the research process are described. ▪ Considerations for how the research environment can be made more accessible and inclusive to the research team/trainees, and how to provide equitable opportunities for all members of the team to engage with the work being conducted are presented.
Anticipated outcomes and benefits	Specific reference to outcomes and benefits that are anticipated to be a direct result from this project, with approximate timescale. How likely are these? How significant might they be?
Leveraging funding	Clear details of how the project aims to leverage external funding as a direct result of this award.
Anticipated non-academic benefits and impact	Communicate how this project will create (non-academic) impact in a way that will benefit and elevate the global reputations of UBCO and Exeter through wider engagement and societal change. What is this potential impact and when, where and by whom might it be felt? Does the project show a capacity for change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life beyond academia?



Perceived value from the investment:	<p>Is the proposal offering value for money? Is it communicating clear evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ a unique opportunity that is in line with the initiative’s purpose▪ mobilizing a new or already interested, but perhaps disparate, research group, or disciplines, to come together and collaborate for the purpose of step change quality research and teaching▪ project management capabilities of the proposers - reassurance that, if funded, the project will run on time, to budget and deliver against agreed aims, activities and outcomes▪ tangible and quantifiable outcomes and impact for the benefit of the institutions as well as the more immediate group▪ the potential to publish high quality papers, influence policy, and leverage external funding
Potential to expand upon existing or newly identified collaboration	Evidence of strength and potential of the relationship. How can the group and its work develop beyond the project? What mechanisms will be used to ensure ongoing communications and interaction? Clear sense of potential trajectory for the project and the relationship.
Advancing and sustaining the partnership	Communicates how the project relationship would contribute to sustaining and strengthening the partnership.