



Duke/Exeter Collaboration Grants: A Call for Proposal Guidelines

Announcing the 2026-27 Duke-Exeter Collaboration Grants with a closing date of October 30, 2026

Section 1: BACKGROUND

Duke University and the University of Exeter have developed a strong and growing portfolio of collaborations advancing mutual interests in research, education, and public service. The partnership was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2019 and renewed with a three-year agreement in February 2024.

In this period Duke-Exeter co-authored research publications have almost tripled in total, along with an increase in the field-weighted citation impact compared to institutional averages. Collaborators funded by our partnership grants have gone on to secure millions of dollars in grant funding from external sources such as the NIH, the Science & Nature People Partnership, the Getty Foundation and European Research Council.

To further strengthen this partnership, Duke and Exeter invite proposals for collaborative, faculty-led initiatives that advance and deepen existing relationships; or establish new ones, all the while positioning teams for high-quality outputs, external funding, and wider impact.

Section 2: GRANT OBJECTIVES

Duke University and the University of Exeter invest in this partnership with the belief that our complimentary expertise allows us to achieve more together than either institution could alone. Detailed mapping of our research strengths and existing collaborations demonstrates outstanding potential for impact in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences; in Environmental and Human Health; in Climate Science and Ocean Protection; and in many more areas.

Given the wide range of areas where our institutions already collaborate and the rich potential to build new links, there are no subject restrictions on this call. Instead, our objectives are to identify projects that will contribute to our shared ambition to drive positive impact for a greener, fairer, and healthier future. Furthermore, we have a strong interest in using funding to support collaborations including additional partners and building networks particularly with a focus on the Global South.

Through these grant opportunities, we aim to support faculty-led collaborations in pursuit of cutting-edge research and impact. We are looking for collaborations to lead to innovations, to support pilot projects, to act as incubators for bids for significant external funding that will help colleagues scale up their work.

Following on from previous rounds of collaborative funding, these awards are meant to serve as catalytic early-stage support: an initial investment in promising work that can build momentum toward greater long-term impact. In addition to supporting project development, it is intended to strengthen recipients' capacity, demonstrate potential, and enhance readiness for future funding opportunities. Proposals should articulate a clear strategic vision for how this support will be leveraged to advance sustained growth and impact. In the proposal form we invite applicants to share examples of external funding possibilities they might explore in the future, in conjunction with their Duke or Exeter partners. Value for money will be a key consideration in assessing applications.



Section 3: GRANT FUNDING

Please note the details below for the two grant lines available.

Initiator: aiming to support pilot projects to establish or broaden collaboration. In summary, the key aims of the grants are:

- To develop and expand relationships between Exeter and Duke
- To support both research and education initiatives
- To enable grant holders to develop projects with a view to securing larger scale external grant funding. To explore the development of collaborative partnerships with additional partners, particularly in the Global South
- Developing initiatives to the point of achieving high impact/high influence publications or equivalent

Initiator Details:

- Award Amount: Colleagues can apply for a maximum of \$7.5k / £5.6k for an Initiator Grant. Applicants requiring small sums of funding are also welcome to apply for this grant.
- Project duration: All funds administered and held by the Exeter PI must be spent and reconciled by 31st July 2027. All funds administered and held by the Duke PI can be spent up until September 30th, and we can consider extended timelines if needed.

Accelerator: aiming to support Exeter and Duke faculty members 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 significant external funding
- To bring together international networks of collaborators, particularly with partners in the Global South, to generate high impact projects
- Developing initiatives to the point of achieving high impact/high influence publications or equivalent

It is anticipated that academic 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.

Accelerator Details:

- Award Amount: Applicants applying for \$7.5k / £5.6k to a maximum of \$15k / £11.2k can apply for an Accelerator award.
- Project duration: All funds administered and held by the Exeter PI must be spent and reconciled by 31st July 2027. All funds administered and held by the Duke PI can be spent up until September 30th, and we can consider extended timelines if needed.

Section 4: ELIGIBILITY

The Duke-Exeter Collaboration Grant will be available to the whole academic community at Exeter and Duke.

- Each proposal must name:
 - At least one applicant from Duke University and one from the University of Exeter.
- Applicants must demonstrate complementary expertise and note a clear rationale for collaboration
- While it is not a requirement, we welcome applications which include additional Co-Is from third party institutions
- Any member of current faculty is invited to apply as long as their contract end date extends beyond the term of the grant (31st July, 2027).



Section 5: ELIGIBLE & INELIGIBLE COSTS

Applicants should ensure there are no conflicts with the terms and conditions of any pre-existing funding.

Eligible:

- Travel and subsistence for Exeter staff for Duke staff
- In line with our intention to build connections in the global south, travel and subsistence for colleagues from additional partner institutions based in LMIC Countries as defined by ([this link](#))
- Research consumables
- External speakers or facilitators
- Meetings, workshops, 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 are not eligible:

- Academic salaries
- Equipment (*such as laptops*)
- Publication costs
- Student fees or tuition
- Indirect costs, estates costs, or overhead associated with internal research facilities

Section 6: APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants will need to complete the Initiator or Accelerator 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.

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 deadline.

Applicants should submit to both institutions (in one email) via the below email addresses by the designated date listed.

Applications will be jointly assessed selected senior administrator and key academic leads for the Duke-Exeter partnership. Applicants will be notified within the specified timeframe (see “Key Dates” section).

Quick Facts:

- Applications must be completed jointly by Duke and Exeter partners
- Applications must be emailed to both institutes (details below), in one single email.
- Applications should demonstrate that activities can begin soon after the award is made
- Projects must be capable of completion within the stated timeframe
- Successful projects will be featured on the websites of both Duke University and the University of Exeter

Submission emails:

- Exeter: GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk
- Duke: global@duke.edu



Section 7: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed competitively against the following criteria:

- **Strategic Fit**
Alignment with one or more thematic priorities and with Duke–Exeter partnership objectives
- **Quality of the Proposal**
 - Clear, well-planned activities
 - Stretching but achievable goals
 - Evidence-based rationale for the project
 - Clear added value of undertaking the work through this partnership
- **Anticipated Outcomes and Benefits**
 - Tangible outputs and benefits
 - Indicative timescales
 - Likelihood of outcomes
 - Significance of outcomes
- **Leveraging of Further Funding**
 - Clear plans to pursue external funding as a direct result of this award
- **Impact Beyond Academia**
 - Potential benefits to society, policy, culture, health, environment, or quality of life
 - Contribution to the global reputation of Duke and Exeter
- **Value for Money**
 - Appropriate use of funds
 - Clear, quantifiable benefits
 - Evidence of strong project management and delivery capability
- **Partnership Development**
 - Strength of the Duke–Exeter relationship
 - Opportunities to build and strengthen impactful networks in the Global South
 - Plans for sustaining collaboration beyond the project
 - Contribution to advancing and strengthening the overall partnership
 - Opportunities to build additional partnerships which will broaden the impact of the activity
 - Build networks of colleagues featuring multiple actors, to strengthen collaborations and create longevity in partnerships

*Please note that individual application feedback is not provided for these applications. Resubmission is by invitation only.

Section 8: KEY DATES

Date	Activity
September 17, 2026	Calls for proposals issued
October 30, 2026	Application deadline
November 20, 2026	Review concluded
November 30, 2026	Applicants notified of outcome
July 31, 2027	Project completion deadline for Exeter funds
September 30, 2027	Project completion deadline for Duke funds
November 1, 2027	Post-project report submission deadline

**All funds administered and held by the Exeter PI must be spent and reconciled by 31st July 2027 due to financial year-end. All funds administered and held by Duke PI can be spent up until September 30th when the project ends, and we can consider extended timelines if needed.*



Section 9: REPORTING/GRANT MANAGEMENT

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 until July 31st 2027 (Exeter), Sept 30th 2027 (Duke) to utilize the funds for the project or initiative. Funds that are not utilised within the specified period will be withdrawn.

Upon completion of the project, 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 Duke and Exeter.

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

Exeter policies: <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/departments/cgr/insuranceauditandrisk/insurancepolicies/travel/>

Duke travel support: <https://travel.duke.edu/>

Exeter applicants working overseas:

Working overseas, even for short periods, has implications on your employment contract, payroll, and benefits and therefore it should be carefully planned to protect yourself as well as the University. For more information, please visit the Global Employment webpages ([link](#)). If you have any questions or queries, please contact globalemployment@exeter.ac.uk.

Resources:

For support with due diligence, risk assessment, and research development, please see below resources from both universities which may be helpful for colleagues seeking to develop applications with multiple partners:

Duke Research Security Link: ResearchSecurity@duke.edu

Exeter link: [Due Diligence - Home](#)

Section 10: CONTACTS

For further information, please contact your home institution:

University of Exeter: Stuart Westhead, Global Partnerships Regional Head North America & Europe
s.westhead@exeter.ac.uk & GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk

Duke University: Katherine Black Conte, Senior Program Coordinator, International Partnerships, Duke Global
kb206@duke.edu