



Exeter – UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership

Visiting Research Student Fellowship (VRSF) Program Application Guidelines

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 focuses on shared strategic priorities under the banner of the [Exeter - UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership](#).

We aim 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 recognizes the excellent foundations and existing linkages shared between Exeter and UBCO faculty, and gives fresh focus through three Key Thematic focus areas:

1. **Adaptation 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 catalyzing new research.
3. **Enhancing Social Justice:** Combining the unique perspectives of Exeter and UBCO faculty / 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.

The University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) and the University of Exeter are jointly offering funded fellowship opportunities for several MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate Students per year to participate in research projects and creative activities.

Program objectives

The Visiting Research Student Fellowship (VRSF) program will provide PhD Students with an opportunity to work with a supervisor on a research project. The key aim of the program is to foster collaboration, develop research skills, and provide students with meaningful experience with projects aligned with the academic and strategic priorities of both institutions.

The specific objectives of the program are to:

- 1) Support pre-defined, high-quality research activities to increase research productivity in one of the key thematic focus areas: Adaptation to Climate and Ecological Change, Innovative Health Initiatives, Enhancing Social Justice.
- 2) Provide PhD students with practical research experience in an international and interdisciplinary academic environment.
- 3) Foster cross-institutional collaborations and academic development.



Student & supervisor eligibility

- The Visiting Research Student Fellowship program is open to MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate students currently enrolled at either the University of Exeter or UBC Okanagan.
- Applicants must demonstrate academic excellence and a keen interest in research.
- Students must meet any additional eligibility requirements specific to the research project.
- Student must not have held a previous Exeter-UBCO Resilience and Sustainability Partnership Visiting Research Student Fellowship.
- Students must be eligible to hold the fellowship by the award start date for the duration of the fellowship.
- For UBC Okanagan, hosts supervisors must be research-stream tenure track faculty members. Teaching faculty are not eligible to be host supervisors. Post-doctoral fellows are not eligible to be host supervisors.

Fellowship details

Award term: applicants may request a minimum of 2 weeks of support and up to 8 weeks. Travel must be complete and items expensed by July 31, 2027.

Award amount: up to **CAD \$7000 / GBP £4000** per fellowship

Award number: at least four (4) fellowships (two by institution)

Cost eligibility

Applicants should develop a budget that is accurate as successful applicants will be required to abide by official reporting, insurance and registration requirements of their home institution as outlined in:

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

Exeter policies:

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/universityofexeter/governanceandcompliance/University_Travel_Policy.pdf

Eligible costs include:

- travel and subsistence costs (meals and accommodation) for the student
- air travel, which must be claimed at the most economical rate available
- travel cancellation insurance and seat reservation charges
- accommodations
- travel health insurance for the student if they do not receive any such benefits from their institution and/or other source
- safety-related expenses for field work, such as protective gear, immunizations, etc.
- entry visa fees when required for the purpose of the exchange
- public transportation fees for travel made to the workplace
- meeting, venue and catering costs at host institution (maximum \$200 CAD, £100 GBP)

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

- student fees / tuition
- salaries and benefits
- third-party travel costs



- publication costs
- indirect costs, estates/capital costs and overheads associated with internal research facilities
- passport and immigration fees
- reimbursement for airfare purchased with personal frequent flyer points programs

Notes for travel costs and logistics:

- Consider the timing of your visit as the cost for accommodations increase significantly in the summer.
- Exeter has multiple campus locations. Be aware of the campus and location you are considering.
- UBC has multiple campus location. Only the Okanagan campus, located in Kelowna, is eligible for this opportunity.
- To allow adequate time for obtaining travel documentation, it is recommended that travel be scheduled at least 6-8 weeks after the anticipated award notification (10-12 weeks is often safer).
- Different citizenships may require different immigration documents and/or timelines for processing.

Resources

Students may be granted access to resources at the host institution such as research facilities, libraries, and other resources including wellbeing and accommodation support. Fellowship recipients will be considered a visiting research student at the host institution. Please familiarize yourself with the institutional policies.

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/specifcites/tga/pgr/PGR_Handbook_Chapter_16.pdf

<https://goglobal.ubc.ca/go-global/coming-ubc/visiting-international-research-students>

Notes on visiting student program fees:

- For Exeter students who are visiting UBCO:
 - the Visiting International Research Students (VIRS) program fee (\$440) will be paid by the VRSF program on your behalf.
 - Students attending UBCO must have iMED health insurance for the duration of your visit. Please note iMED coverage is per calendar month. If your arrival and departure dates cross into the next month, you will be charged for two full months. Health insurance is an eligible expense and may be included in your budget (\$79 CAD / month + \$10.95 processing, fees subject to change). Please consult the UBCO guidelines for more information.
- For UBCO students who are visiting Exeter:
 - the Visiting Research Student - Other Advanced Studies (OAS) program fee will be paid by the VRSF program on your behalf.

Application process

- 1) Proposal submission:** PhD, MPhil and professional doctorate students wishing to undertake collaborative work with the host institution must submit a full proposal by the deadline. A complete application includes the following components submitted online here:

<https://ubc.jotform.com/251685979544880>

- a. Application form: name, email, student number, degree information, home institution, expected travel dates, project title
- b. Research proposal (max 1000 words) and appendix (if needed, max 1 page)
- c. Quality of the student (max 500 words)



- d. Quality of the environment (max 500 words)
- e. Budget form
- f. Home supervisor approval
- g. Host supervisor approval

Notes on Home and Host Supervisor approval process:

Students will be asked to provide the name and email for the home and host supervisor. Upon submission of the application, both the home and host supervisor will be automatically notified to provide their approvals.

Both the home and host supervisor must submit their approvals in order for your application to be considered complete. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the home and host supervisors are aware of this task and available to provide their approval in a timely manner.

Applicants will also be asked to confirm that they have the support of the Program, Unit or Division Head for UBCO Students and the support of the Department Director of Postgraduate Research for University of Exeter Students to undertake this fellowship.

It is critical to check with the existing supervisor at the home institution and the potential host supervisor as early as possible to ensure the proposal is developed with their support and approvals are in place at the time of application. All approvals must be received within one week of the proposal deadline.

- 2) Review and selection:** Applications will be reviewed by a panel of senior administrator and key academic leads for the partnership from both institutions. The review process will include evaluating each proposal against the assessment criteria and selecting the projects that will be recommended for funding.
- 3) Notification of results:** All applicants will be notified about the results within the specified timeframe (see important dates). Once notified, students will be required to complete their Fellowship by July 31, 2027, and submit a final report summarizing their research outcomes within a month after the fellowship.

[Important dates](#)

Submission deadlines are in Pacific Time (PT).

Date	Activity
October 1, 2026	Calls for applications issued
November 12, 2026	Application deadline (11:59pm PT)
November 17, 2026	Signature approval deadline (11:59pm PT)
January 4, 2027 (week of)	Anticipated notice of outcomes
January 1, 2027	Earliest project start date
July 31, 2027	Latest project end date (complete exchange and expenditures)
1 month after exchange	Post-project report submission deadline



Assessment criteria

Students will be asked to provide details in their application about how their proposed fellowship will address the following assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria	Description
Quality of the proposed research or creative activities (max 1000 words + 1 page for ancillary material as needed)	Completeness of the background and literature review. Quality and originality of the questions and strategic importance of the proposal to address knowledge gaps in a key thematic focus area. Clarity of the goals, research design, and methods. Feasibility of the project and appropriateness of the project timeline, including timeliness of the visit. Identification of potential risks that may arise during the project and possible mitigation strategies. Appropriateness of the results and process to generate new knowledge and make an impact.
Quality of the student (max 500 words)	Qualifications and previous training and experience of the applicant to undertake the activities described in the proposal. Evidence of leadership through contributions to the research field, in addition to curricular and/or professional contributions. Evidence of generating knowledge that is creative/original and of high quality.
Quality of the environment (max 500 words)	Alignment of the proposed activities with existing research activities performed by the host supervisor Availability of resources (personnel, facilities, and equipment) to achieve the research goals and ensure the success of the work. Evidence of mentorship and adequacy of the mentorship plan to support the student towards developing a personalized and world- class international student experience.



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 to utilize the funds for the project before the end date. Funds that are not utilized within the specified period will be withdrawn.

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

This report will be utilized 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 of their home institution as outlined in:

UBCO travel policies (CWL required):

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

Exeter policies:

[https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/universityofexeter/governanceandcompliance/University Travel Policy.pdf](https://www.exeter.ac.uk/v8media/universityofexeter/governanceandcompliance/University_Travel_Policy.pdf)

- Funding is only provided for the activities detailed in the application, unless by prior agreement.
- Expenditure must not exceed the value of the award.
- Details of the award will be listed on the University of Exeter Global Partnerships, or the UBCO website as appropriate.
- The home institution may, from time to time, contact award holders to monitor progress and expenditure.
- A final project report and financial acquittal will need to be completed and submitted within **one month** of the visit.

Contacting the host institution

If you are interested in making an application for a Visiting Research Student Fellowship, but you require support in contacting potential supervisors at the Host Institution, Exeter Students should please contact GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk and UBCO students should please contact vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca for advice.

Support with setting up

You can seek advice from the Host Institution Partner on matters of accommodation in either the Kelowna or Exeter areas, but please note that the Host Institutions cannot secure your accommodation for you, and do not have visiting student housing available on campus. You may consider short-term apartments or hotels, and the Host Institution can advise on locations and travel time to and from campus.

In drafting your budget, please provide examples of actual costs whether for accommodation, local transport and international travel. Applicants may request a minimum of 2 weeks of support and up to 8 weeks - the budget should be adapted to the duration of your fellowship.



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



University
of Exeter

Please contact the Host Institution if you have any questions on IT resources that might be available to you, access to physical office space and staff support while you are on your fellowship. Please note that the expectation would be that you are physically engaged at the Host Institution campus for the duration of your fellowship and working with your supervisor at the Host Institution.

Upon completing your fellowship, you will be asked to complete a brief narrative outlining your activities and costs incurred throughout your fellowship. You may also be asked to be available during future cycles of the UBCO -Exeter Visiting Research Student Fellowship program to share your experiences and advice with prospective applicants.

Contact information

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 GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk

UBCO: Pierre Rondier (Manager of Strategic Initiatives) pierre.rondier@ubc.ca; Office of Research and Innovation, Strategic Initiatives vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca