Workshop Grant Scheme

Background

The University of Queensland (UQ) and the University of Exeter (Exeter) believe that the most complex of global challenges – ranging from food and water security to political instability, healthy living and digital worlds – require interdisciplinary research that spans institutions, countries and even continents. To achieve true impact, the two Universities therefore joined to create the UQ-Exeter Institute, through which our talented academic staff work together to apply their distinct perspectives and expertise to addressing global challenges.

In support of this vision, the UQ-Exeter Institute offers a pump priming funding scheme to promote broadening and deepening of the collaboration between our two universities. The funding scheme has two stages: the Workshop Grant Scheme and the Accelerator Grant Scheme. An Accelerator Grant application should usually follow the successful completion of a Workshop Grant project and is intended to facilitate development of an application for an identified source of external funding (e.g. a specified funding body call or industry opportunity).

The Workshop Grant Scheme is now open for applications, with a closing date of **30 March 2026**.

To read more about the UQ-Exeter Institute, visit: https://uq-exeter.institute/

Objectives

Workshop Grants should be seen as the first step towards an application for external funding. Applications should be made jointly by UQ and Exeter staff for funding to support delivery of, and attendance at, collaborative events across the UQ-Exeter themes that will build links and foster new joint projects capable of securing external research grant, industry, or commercial funding. The need to travel rather than meet virtually must be justified.

In summary, the key aims are to:

- facilitate generation of ideas and exploration of novel concepts to a point at which external funding can be sought (which may require a second stage Accelerator Grant);

- support enabling activities that bring together academic staff with excellent and complementary expertise and capability;

- address challenges with potential for significant impact that could not be as effectively carried out by one partner on their own, demonstrating clear added value from the UQ-Exeter Institute;

- promote and facilitate groundbreaking interdisciplinary research through networking/ community building/ showcasing shared research strengths; or the development of new, shared educational provision leading to significant enhancement of the curriculum and student experience (e.g. hackathons, grand challenge events, collaborative online teaching, guest lectures, exchanges, summer/winter schools).

A partnership between

Applications are sought from across the four themes of the partnership:

- Healthy Living
- Global Environment Futures
- Digital Worlds and Disruptive Technologies
- Mineral Security and Sustainability

Funding details

Applications up to a maximum £7,500 GBP/$14,500 AUD are invited.

Funding will be provided to the nominated overall lead applicant, who will be responsible for management of the project, the budget for both institutions and reporting on outcomes.

Up to three Workshop Grants per institution will be awarded in 2026. All funded applications will be promoted via the UQ-Exeter Institute website (UQ-Exeter Institute | Collaborative Global Research for a Sustainable Future) and must be completed within a nine-month period from the award date, after which any remaining funding will be lost. Exeter lead applicants should be aware that the project timeline crosses financial year-end (31 July) so they will need to specify anticipated spending before and after 31 July.

Eligibility criteria

Workshop Grants are available to any members of the UQ and Exeter staff communities and should have a lead applicant at each institution.

Eligible costs include:

- Support for delivery of digital or in person events, including costs for venues, catering, external speakers and facilitators.
- Support for development of joint education initiatives.
- Co-Creation of digital resources.
- Directly incurred costs for staff directly employed to deliver core elements of the proposed activity.
- Travel and subsistence - if international travel is justified. We strongly encourage aligning any travel with the UQ-Exeter Institute Symposium being hosted in Exeter from 1-3 July 2026. Please also ensure you are aware of current visa requirements and the latest University policy updates on international travel here:
- Exeter: https://universityofexeteruk.sharepoint.com/sites/Travel/SitePages/Booking-your-Travel.aspx
- UQ: https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/travel-policy-0

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

- academic salaries
- student fees/tuition
- indirect costs and overheads
- publication costs
- costs associated with internal research facilities.

Application process

Lead applicants should discuss their application with the appropriate UQ-Exeter Theme Lead at their home institution in advance of submission. Theme Leads are listed below.

Applicants must complete the Workshop Grant application form in conjunction with their co-applicant(s) at the partner institution. An overall lead applicant must be nominated, to whom funds will be transferred if successful.

Applicants should ensure that activities are planned and scheduled to enable completion within nine months. No extensions will be possible.

Applications should be submitted to both institutions at the following email addresses by 30 March 2026:

Exeter: UQ-ExeterInstitute@exeter.ac.uk

UQ: uq-exeter@uq.edu.au

To guide applicants in seeking non-academic partners, Exeter applicants can find resources in the Ideas Hub and are advised to complete a 'tell us about your idea' to engage with Exeter Innovation. For guidance on applying for external funding, Exeter applicants can find guidance here: Academic 'How-to' guides.

To guide applicants in seeking non-academic partners, UQ applicants can engage with UniQuest to explore potential partnership opportunities. They may also seek guidance from Strategic Partnerships - Government and Industry. For guidance on applying for external funding, UQ applicants can access resources available on the Research Support website.

Assessment criteria

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

- quality of initiative/activity
- potential to lead on to securing external funding
- achievability and strength of envisaged outcomes
- perceived value for money
- potential to develop sustainable collaboration
- alignment with UQ-Exeter Institute theme(s)
- alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Appendix A gives 'top tips' and Appendix B provides further details of the assessment criteria.

Applications will be jointly assessed and shortlisted by a review panel at each University. Final funding decisions will be made by the UQ-Exeter Institute Strategy Board. Lead applicants will be notified within the timeframe outlined below.

Key dates

Activity	Date
Call opens	23 February 2026
Deadline for applications	30 March 2026
Notification of outcomes	30 April 2026
Project completion deadline	29 January 2027
Report submission deadline	30 March 2027

Feedback and resubmissions

Please note that feedback is not usually provided for Workshop Grant applications. Resubmission is by invitation only. Please refer to the 'pitfalls and top tips' in Appendix A to assist with preparing your submission.

Grant acquittal and reporting

Awardees must agree to comply with all terms and conditions related to the receipt of funding including deadlines and procedures for acquittal of funds and reporting on outcomes.

Awardees will have up to a maximum of nine months after the award date to utilise the funds. Funds that are not utilised within the specified period will be withdrawn.

Upon completion of the project, awardees will have a maximum of two months to submit a brief report outlining the successes and outcomes of the project. including plans for seeking future funding and timescale for project deliverables. Report forms will be provided to Project Leads. Outputs from the funding are also to be reported a year after project completion.

Reports will be used by the UQ-Exeter Institute for the follow up of potential opportunities and reporting on outcomes, and will potentially be highlighted on the UQ-Exeter Institute, UQ and Exeter websites.

If a funded project includes international travel, award-holders must abide by the official reporting, insurance and registration requirements as outlined in Exeter and UQ policies:

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

UQ: https://travel.uq.edu.au/

Theme Leads

Applicants should contact the relevant UQ-Exeter Theme Lead at their home institution to discuss their submission and its alignment with the theme(s).

Healthy Living leadership team:

- Associate Professor Nicholas Gilson – UQ

- Associate Professor Conny Guell – Exeter

- Dr Samantha Van Beurden – Exeter

Global Environmental Futures leadership team:

- [Dr Sarit Kaserzon](#) – UQ

- [Professor Peter Mumby](#) – UQ

- [Dr Ruth Thurstan](#) – Exeter

Digital Worlds and Disruptive Technologies leadership team:

- [Professor Achim Brucker](#) – Exeter

- [Associate Professor Stephen Viller](#) – UQ

Mineral Security and Sustainability leadership team:

- [Associate Professor Steven Micklethwaite](#) – UQ

- [Professor Julian Ortiz Cabrera](#) – Exeter

Contacts

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

Global Partnerships
The University of Queensland
uq-exeter@uq.edu.au

Global Partnerships
The University of Exeter
UQ-ExeterInstitute@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix A: Pitfalls and Top Tips

- **Added value:** a common pitfall is failing to articulate, and therefore persuade the panel, of the added value of your partnership. Your application should clearly articulate what can be achieved as a UQ-Exeter Institute collaboration that could not be achieved as a single institution, evidenced where appropriate. Remember to write in a way that is understandable to an interdisciplinary audience.

- **Leveraging external funding and other tangible outcomes:** applications should clearly specify the route to applying for external funding (anticipated funder, if relevant name of funding call, submission deadline). Details should also be included for other anticipated outcomes e.g. publications, industry links, staff development. Panel members need to be persuaded about the application's value for money. They are looking for clear anticipated outcomes and realistic, cost-effective plans and leadership to achieve them.

- **Step change:** another pitfall is failing to articulate the potential step change that can be achieved through your project. This connects to #1 added value - linking the added value of your partnership to the step-change made possible by the unique resources available through the UQ-Exeter Institute, i.e. what will change: academics, infrastructure, training, external partners etc?

- **Sustainability:** successful applications articulate how the momentum and successes achieved will be sustained in the longer term. Outline a clear plan, which covers areas such as ongoing partnership meetings/communications, future links with industry or other external partners, leveraging further funding, expanding the network, raising the profile and influence of the group both internally and externally.

- **Project** management: provide details about how the project will be managed and how you will achieve the project goals in the time and with the funding available.

Appendix B: Assessment Criteria for the Workshop Grant Scheme

This guidance has been drawn up to assist applicants when completing their Workshop and Accelerator 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
Quality of initiative/activity	Evidence that the application has been well planned, with strong potential for taking forward a development or collaboration. Goals should be stretching but achievable. Evidence should be provided to show the need for and value of the proposed research and how this aligns with Institute, Exeter and UQ's strategic objectives. Explain the added value from this project being undertaken through the UQ-Exeter Institute rather than by an individual academic or institution.
Potential to lead on to securing external funding	Clearly specified route to seeking external funding, for example from a funding body or industry partner. Specific details should be included, for example name and deadline of funding call.
Anticipated outcomes and benefits	Achievability and strength of envisaged outcomes, aligned with the UQ-Exeter Institute's purpose. Specific details of anticipated outcomes should be included.
Value for money	The application explains how it will offer value for money. For example, evidence of how it will mobilise a new or already interested, but perhaps disparate, group of researchers or disciplines to collaborate to achieve a step change in quality research or education. Assurance that the project will be managed effectively so that it should run on time and within budget and deliver against agreed aims and outcomes.
Potential to develop sustainable collaboration	Evidence of strength and potential of the relationship and that this will continue to develop beyond the project, including mechanisms to be used to ensure ongoing communications and interaction. A clear sense of the potential trajectory for the project and the relationship.
Strategic fit	Clear information on how the proposed project aligns with, and would enhance the development of, one or more of the UQ-Exeter Institute themes.
Alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals	How the project aligns with one or more of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to provide a blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all.