



# 2017 Grants for Catalyzing Research Clusters

## Award summary

The Vice-President Research and Innovation & the Provost and Vice-President Academic have established the Grants for Catalyzing Research Clusters [GCRC] competition to provide seed funding in support of developing clusters of research excellence at UBC. For the purposes of this funding competition, a cluster of research excellence is defined as an inter-disciplinary network of researchers at UBC who organize to solve key challenges facing society. Our intent with this funding competition is to enable leading researchers to work closely together as a unit on problems that transcend the traditional boundaries associated with departments, institutions, and funding agencies. These awards are specifically targeted at catalyzing advanced research initiatives with the expectation that awards will be used to enable the cluster to have more significant impact than otherwise possible.

## Current competition

*There will only be one competition in the fall for 2017 GCRC awards. New [first time funded] clusters and previously funded clusters are eligible to apply in this competition [see details below].*

Researchers are invited to submit a proposal (up to a maximum of 5 pages) in the form of a plan to show how the seed funding will be used to create and/or advance a cluster of research excellence.

Applications should clearly:

- (1) describe research themes;
- (2) identify secured team members, collaborators & partners [potential collaborators and partners may be included in the plan, but must be differentiated from secured collaborators and partners];
- (3) provide objective measures of excellence in research [and/or artistic creation], including national and international standing;
- (4) articulate goals and expected outcomes of the GCRC award; and
- (5) detail how funds will be used to achieve the expected outcomes (i.e., justification of proposed activities).

The goals to be achieved with the GCRC award may vary among proposals (e.g., new partnerships, pursue increased extramural funding opportunities, international collaboration), but applications should make a strong case for the value of those goals to the proposed research cluster and demonstrate how the funding will be used to achieve those outcomes. Clusters can include non-faculty researchers and we encourage clusters to include researchers from both UBC campuses, but the lead PI must be a faculty member at the Vancouver campus.

Please note: applications should seek to generate new directions for research [and/or artistic creation], rather than reproduce activities that would be conducted in the normal course of a researcher's activities. Direct costs of research and student scholarships/fellowships are ineligible.

## Previously funded clusters

Previously funded clusters [<https://research.ubc.ca/about-vpr/initiatives/research-excellence-clusters>] are eligible to reapply for either *Emerging* or *Established* cluster grant categories. In addition to the merits of the new proposal, previously funded clusters will be rigorously evaluated based on how they met the expected outcomes of the original cluster grant. If outcomes varied from the original cluster proposal, please contact Kyle Demes [[kyle.demes@ubc.ca](mailto:kyle.demes@ubc.ca)] to discuss beforehand. Please attach along with your 5-page application, the outcomes form [[www.research.ubc.ca/GCRC-outcomes](http://www.research.ubc.ca/GCRC-outcomes)].

## Award details

In this competition, we invite applications from clusters centered in any of the following disciplines: Health, Science & Engineering, Social Sciences & Humanities, or Performing & Creative Arts. In all disciplinary categories, we aim to support both emerging and established clusters of research excellence that seek to propel their clusters to global leadership. Applicants will be asked to indicate at submission time if the cluster is *Emerging* or *Established*. Generalized characteristics and potential catalytic activities are presented here for illustrative purposes:

	<i>Example cluster characteristics</i>	<i>Example catalytic activities</i>
<b><i>Emerging clusters</i></b>	Emerging leaders [collaborative history a bonus] Some knowledge mobilization activities Defined pathway to impact Strong academic impact	Secure group grants Demonstrate group collaboration Develop partnerships Community engagement
<b><i>Established clusters</i></b>	Global leaders Sustained knowledge mobilization activities Strong socio-economic impact Sustained funding model	Partner across sectors Active in translation process Expand international partnerships Innovation development plan

A total funding envelope of \$3M is available for this competition, with the expectation that several applications will be funded from each of the disciplinary streams listed above. *Emerging* clusters may request an award up to \$100,000 per proposal, while *Established* clusters may apply for awards up to \$200,000. In both scenarios, a strong budget justification is expected to align specific activities with goals and expected outcomes. Review committees will carefully consider each budget item and may recommend funding of only some budget items. Successful applications will be notified in December 2017 and awards will be distributed in January 2018. Funding must be spent within a year of award receipt.

In addition to funds, successful cluster awards will be provided additional support from the VP Research & Innovation Office in the form of web development [provision of a web template plus development support] and access to knowledge mobilization, innovation, funding development and community engagement specialists. Applications that request funding for these types of activities must specify why additional support is required.

Successful clusters will be required to attend a pre-award cluster workshop with the VPRI Office on November 29<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-10:30am. Please hold this date and time in your calendars when submitting an application.

## Submission and selection processes

Applications for this funding call must be submitted as a single PDF document to the VP Research & Innovation electronic portal [[www.research.ubc.ca/GCRC-Submission](http://www.research.ubc.ca/GCRC-Submission)] by end of day November 2, 2017. Please note that during submission, you will be required to select one of two award levels [*Established* vs. *Emerging*] and one of the four disciplinary categories. If you are uncertain to which stream you should apply, contact Kyle Demes [[kyle.demes@ubc.ca](mailto:kyle.demes@ubc.ca)] in advance of submission to discuss.

Inter-disciplinary panels will review applications and make decisions based on merit and the ability to demonstrate how seed funds will be used to develop or expand a leading research cluster. If an application submitted to the *Established* category does not meet the *Established* cluster criteria, it will be considered in the *Emerging* category. Specific assessment criteria include:

For *Emerging* and *Established* clusters:

- The cluster addresses one or more complex and key questions facing society [or *grand challenges*];
- Creation or enhancement of the cluster has the potential for transformative impact on UBC and on society;
- Proposal leverages GCRC funding to attract further funding opportunities;
- Interdisciplinary, inter-institutional, and inter-sectoral collaborative research;
- Demonstrated evidence of excellence in research and/or artistic creation;

Additional criteria for *Established* clusters include:

- Demonstrated track record of teamwork [e.g., co-publications, co-supervised students, team grants, etc.];
- Evidence of knowledge translation and mobilization activities [e.g., community engagement, policy impact, commercialization];
- Ability to achieve a sustained funding model;

Finally, previously funded clusters will be evaluated based on the outcomes of the previous cluster grant and whether the goals of the award were met.

## Additional information

The VPRI office will hold two informational sessions about this funding competition. We encourage groups who are interested in applying for this competition to attend and learn more about this program. The information session will be held in the Michael Smith Laboratories Lecture Theatre [Room 102, 2185 E Mall, Vancouver]:

- August 24th 1:00-2:30pm; and
- October 4th 9:00-10:30am

If you plan to attend, please register online at <https://research.ubc.ca/gcrc>.

For further information on the GCRC funding competition, contact Kyle Demes in the VP Research & Innovation Office [[kyle.demes@ubc.ca](mailto:kyle.demes@ubc.ca)].