The Eminence Program – 2020 Competition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice of Intent Deadline</th>
<th>Application Deadline</th>
<th>Funding Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 4, 2020 (4PM)</td>
<td>September 21, 2020 (4PM)</td>
<td>November 1, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DETAILS**

The UBC Okanagan Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (VPRI) has established the Eminence competition to provide funding to support the development of clusters of research excellence at UBC Okanagan.

For the purposes of this funding competition, a cluster of research excellence is defined as an inter- and/or multi-disciplinary network of researchers focused on addressing key challenges facing society. Each cluster of research excellence is comprised of an inter- and/or multi-disciplinary cohort of scholars who are leaders in their respective areas of expertise and who are working together on complex issues. Clusters funded through the Eminence Program are expected to perform high-impact work that transcends traditional departmental or institutional boundaries, mobilizes new knowledge, and allows UBC to address issues in ways that single disciplines cannot accomplish.

At UBC Okanagan, we expect our Eminence-funded clusters to become:

- A recruitment tool to attract new faculty and trainees;
- Highly competitive for funding with strong potential to succeed in major funding competitions (eg. CFI, CREATE, NCE, SSHRC-IG);
- Vertically integrated with undergraduate and graduate training programs;
- Catalysts to leverage regional, provincial and/or national assets and partnerships; and
- Provincially recognized centres of research excellence with an emerging national and international profile

The Eminence Program is designed to support clusters of research excellence that leverage existing strengths and are aligned with the strategic plans of the units, faculties, campus and university.

The Program is intended to support projects that address UBC’s commitment, as articulated in UBC’s Strategic Plan, *Shaping UBC’s Next Century*, to Indigenization, equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is also aligned with UBC Okanagan’s cross-cutting commitments to further regional socio-economic development. Applicants will be asked to articulate how cluster activities and structures will respond to these commitments.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Clusters must have between three to ten members and a maximum of two cluster leads. In cases where two leads are named, a single administrative lead must be identified. Cluster Lead(s) must be faculty at UBC Okanagan with a full-time academic appointment in the tenured or tenure-track research
stream. A Cluster Lead is expected to have a well established research program and demonstrated leadership experience.

Cluster members may include faculty from UBC’s Okanagan campus, Point Grey campus or other Canadian post-secondary institutions with full-time academic appointments. Note that while proposals can involve faculty from other organizations, the primary aim of the Eminence Program is to cluster talent within UBC Okanagan campus. Individual faculty can lead a maximum of one cluster, and can participate in a maximum of two clusters.

**NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY**

Cluster Lead must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) using the online fillable form by **August 4, 2020 at 4:00 PM**. As part of the NOI submission, the Cluster Lead must copy and paste an email from their Dean or Associate Dean of Research to confirm Faculty-level sign off at the NOI stage. The NOI is non-competitive and will be used internally to plan the review panel.

**FULL APPLICATION**

Applicants are invited to submit a proposal that describes how three years of Eminence funding would be deployed to establish and/or advance a cluster of research excellence in any research or knowledge creation field. Applications will consist of a single PDF document that includes the following (in order):

- **Cover page** including 100-word lay summary and institutional signatures
- A free-form proposal addressing the evaluation criteria (4 pages maximum)
  
  *Proposals must be written using a 12-point black font, single line spacing and a standard, single column on an 8.5” x 11” page layout for documents; references and figures are included in the page limit. No supplemental materials, such as appendices, are allowed.*
  
  *Renewals* – Applicants submitting a request to renew funding for an existing cluster must address additional criteria described below (2 pages maximum)

- Annual budgets and justifications for each year of funding using the budget template; budgets may be supplemented through direct and in-kind support from participating faculties (e.g. course release) and partners, but this is not a requirement for application

- A 2-page CV for each cluster member which highlights key accomplishments relevant to the proposed cluster activities

- **Resubmissions** - Applicants resubmitting a proposal not funded in the 2019 Eminence competition may include a response to reviewers (1 page maximum)

- **Optional** - Up to three letters of support from relevant secured partners

Applications for this funding call must be uploaded through the online form by **September 21, 2020 at 4:00 PM**.
EVALUATION CRITERIA

Vision and Governance of the Cluster:
- Elaboration of a clear vision for the cluster that will be achieved through the Eminence award, including the potential of the cluster to:
  - have a transformative impact on UBC and on society; and/or
  - attract further external funding opportunities; and/or
  - support training opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students;
- A detailed description of the planned activities that will establish a sustained cluster of research excellence (e.g. group meetings, co-supervision/training of students, strategic planning exercises, development of inter- and/or multi-disciplinary methodologies, partnership development, knowledge translation, etc.);
- A management plan for the cluster that considers governance, communication, team building and administrative supports that will enable the cluster’s success;

Research Excellence:
- Evidence of excellence in research, scholarly activity and/or artistic creation of the individual cluster members and the team as a whole, as determined by impact statements, discipline-specific metrics, national and international stature and/or external funding levels; evidence of leadership experience for the Cluster Lead;
- Description of the cluster’s planned inter- and/or multi-disciplinary research approaches to address key questions facing society and why they are needed; details on how the different perspectives, methodologies, etc. will be applied or integrated; evidence that the team has the required expertise to execute an inter- and/or multi-disciplinary approach;

Engagement and Commitments:
- As appropriate, evidence of community and/or partner engagement;
- Articulation of the cluster’s plan to respond to UBC’s commitment, as articulated in UBC’s Strategic Plan\(^1\) to (1) Indigenization and (2) equity, diversity, and inclusion; and UBC Okanagan’s cross-cutting commitments to exploring the conditions of, and furthering, regional socio-economic development. **Budget should include funding to support these commitments.**

Special Criteria for Renewals
- Evidence of the cluster (as a whole, not of individual members) in making significant progress towards meeting the expectations of the Eminence program during its first term of funding;
- A detailed proposal outlining the cluster’s plan to achieve sustainability after a second and final term of Eminence funding.

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\(^1\) See for example in Shaping UBC’s Next Century:
"a research culture that interacts in positive and respectful ways with Indigenous people and Indigenous knowledge, and that welcomes the participation of members of other historically excluded groups." (pg. 50)
"cultivat[ing] a diverse community that creates and sustains equitable and inclusive campuses” (pg. 42)
"build[ing] a diverse culture that integrates our themes of innovation, collaboration and inclusion, and infuses them through all our activities” (pg. 13)
**ADJUDICATION PROCESS**

A review panel will make recommendations for funding to the Deans. The Deans will assess the proposals’ alignment with the strategic research priorities of the units, faculties, campus and university and make final recommendations to the Provost and Vice-Principal of Research & Innovation (VPRI), UBC Okanagan. Final decisions on funding will be made by the Provost and VPRI.

**AWARD DETAILS**

Clusters may request funding ranging from $20,000 to $200,000 per year. Successful applications will be funded for three years, and will be eligible to re-apply for one additional three year term. Successful applicants will be notified in October 2020 and Year 1 funding will be disbursed effective November 1, 2020. A revised budget will be required for clusters that receive only partial funding.

Cluster Lead(s) and, if applicable, the cluster’s project coordinator will be required to:

- Attend a kick-off meeting with the VPRI Office on November 13, 2020 from 10:00 am-12:00 pm
- Work with the VPRI Major Awards Coordinator throughout the funding period to review budget, expenditure forecast, and activity planning
- Submit a yearly progress and financial report

**ELIGIBILITY OF BUDGET REQUESTS**

Budget should reflect activities to establish and/or advance a cluster of research excellence.

**Eligible:**

- Direct research costs (including consumables) that explicitly support the cluster’s interdisciplinary research activities (annual maximum of $25,000 per cluster)
- The costs of cluster meetings, workshops, and/or conferences
- Salary costs for a cluster administrator/coordinator
- Community and stakeholder engagement costs, such as per diems or honorariums
- Communications and marketing materials or services
- Costs for professional development or training of team members and their HQP (for e.g. EDI training or cultural safety training)
- Postdoctoral stipends and/or top-ups
- Undergraduate and Graduate student stipends and/or top-ups
- Critical shared research equipment or tool that is demonstrably of benefit to the interdisciplinary research activities of cluster members (one-time, to a maximum of $75,000)
- Cluster member travel between UBC’s two campuses in Kelowna and Vancouver
- Cluster member travel to significant conferences and meetings (annual maximum of $15,000 per cluster)
- Faculty or trainee recruitment visits (annual maximum of $5000 per cluster)
- Relocation costs for new recruits (annual maximum of $2,500 per recruit)
Non-eligible:

- Furniture
- Renovations
- Course releases

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Term of the Grant: The term of the grant is for three years with funding for years two and three conditional upon receipt and approval of an annual report that assesses progress towards activities, goals, milestones and outcomes articulated in the proposal.

Financial distribution for Year 2 and Year 3 is contingent on satisfactory progress and a closing balance at the end of the annual reporting period of less than 25% of the annual award. Clusters who carry-forward the previous year’s funding will have until March 31st to draw it down to <25% and receive the next year’s funding installment. Clusters will not be allowed to carry-forward unspent balances beyond March 31st.

Budget changes must be justified and must have a positive impact on the planned cluster-building and research activities of the cluster.

All eligible expenditures must be incurred prior to the end of the three-year award term after which time any unspent funds will be returned to the VPRI. With justification a no-cost extension may be granted at the end of year three at the discretion of the VPRI.

Cluster governance: Clusters will have a single Administrative Cluster Leader (who may designate a delegate in case of extended absence). The Administrative Cluster Lead will be responsible for managing all aspects of the cluster, including financial oversight, and will provide an annual report that describes progress against milestones on October 1 of each year to the VPRI.