



The Eminence Program – CLUSTERS OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE GRANT

<u>Notice of Intent Deadline</u>	<u>Full Application Deadline</u>	<u>Notice of Award</u>	<u>Funding Start Date</u>
August 10, 2022	September 16, 2022	Early November 2022	Renewed - Nov 1, 2022 Newly funded – April 1, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Fostering interdisciplinary research excellence and collaboration is a central priority in [UBC's strategic plans](#). The UBC Okanagan Vice-Principal, Research and Innovation (VPRI) has established the Eminence Program to provide funding to support the formation and growth of **interdisciplinary¹ research excellence clusters** at UBC Okanagan. Researchers from all disciplines are invited to apply for funding.

An interdisciplinary research excellence cluster is defined as a network of researchers spanning multiple disciplines at UBC who form and nurture interdisciplinary teams that foster partnerships and collaborations, develop new research questions/directions/themes in research creation, address key societal and cultural problems, and work together to solve challenges that transcend traditional boundaries.

GOALS OF THE EMINENCE PROGRAM

The Eminence Program is an opportunity for UBC Okanagan researchers to explore collaborations and methodologies that transcend traditional, departmental, or institutional boundaries and address complex issues in ways that a single person or discipline cannot accomplish on their own.

Clusters funded through the Eminence Program are expected to advance purposeful, coordinated approaches and perform high-impact work.

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

- Support interdisciplinary groups of researchers and partners
- Advance UBC Okanagan's research capacity by generating new external funding
- Leverage partnerships and create local, national, and global connections
- Demonstrate creativity, resilience, and shared risk-taking to explore new opportunities and catalyze outputs
- Mobilize knowledge and make research accessible to appropriate stakeholders

¹ UBC Okanagan follows the Tri-council approach which recognizes that the terms “multidisciplinary,” “transdisciplinary,” and “interdisciplinary” have different connotations and their usage across and between research disciplines can vary. For this competition, “interdisciplinary” is used as an umbrella term to refer to all three concepts inclusively.



- Address UBC strategic priorities and commitments with meaningful and appropriate reflections on:
 - Reconciliation, decolonization, and indigenization, as described in the UBC [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#);
 - Equity, diversity, and inclusion, as described in the UBC [Inclusion Action Plan](#); and,
 - Regional impact and social-economic development, as described in the UBCO Strategic Plan [Aspire](#)

AWARD DETAILS

New for 2022, the VPRI is offering **Cluster-Building Grants**. These are intended to provide teams of faculty with the means to support engagement activities (e.g. workshops, meetings, seminar series, pilot studies) designed to enable the development of Eminence Cluster applications. This pilot program will provide successful applicants with up to \$5,000 for Cluster-Building Activities. Please refer to the Cluster-Building Grant Program Terms for more information.

The principal opportunity in the Eminence Program is the **Clusters of Research Excellence Grant**. Applicants may request funding ranging from \$20,000 to \$200,000 per year for a three-year term. Existing Eminence Clusters are eligible to re-apply for one additional three-year term.

Successful applicants will be notified in November. Funding for new Clusters will start on April 1. Funding for renewed Clusters will reflect the original award terms. Upon receipt of an award letter, the Cluster Administrative Lead must submit an RPIF to ORS for the grant to be established.

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

- Attend a kick-off meeting with the VPRI Office
- Attend touchpoint meetings with the VPRI Office throughout the funding period
- Submit yearly progress and financial reports (templates will be provided)

ELIGIBILITY

Clusters may have between four to ten Cluster Members, including Cluster Lead(s). Clusters may have a maximum of two Cluster Leads. In cases where two leads are named, a single Administrative Lead must be identified. Individual faculty can lead a maximum of one Cluster and can participate in a maximum of two Clusters.

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 with demonstrated leadership and/or interdisciplinary experience.

Cluster Members may include faculty holding full-time academic appointments at UBC's Okanagan campus, Point Grey campus, or other Canadian post-secondary institutions. Note that while proposals can involve faculty from other organizations, the primary aim of the Eminence Program is to cluster talent within the UBC Okanagan campus. Only Cluster Members are permitted to hold sub-grants.



New for 2022, applicants are invited to identify up to 6 Cluster Collaborators, where applicable. Cluster Collaborators represent key contributors to the project who are not faculty. They can be individuals or groups from industry, academia, government, the public, alumni, community groups, non-profits, donors, undergraduate students, graduate students, research staff, student clubs, etc. Cluster Members and Cluster Collaborators will be listed on the UBCO VPRI Research Cluster homepage.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Templates and forms can be found on the [VPRI Internal Funding webpage](#).

PHASE 1 - NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY

The Cluster Lead must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) by submitting the NOI Form to vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca by **August 10, 2022, at 4:00 PM**. Faculty sign-off from the Dean or Associate Dean of Research for the Lead and Co-Lead (if applicable) is required for the NOI. An RPIF is not required at this stage.

The NOI is non-competitive and will be used to plan the review panel. NOIs (titles and membership) will be shared with ADRs and Deans. The Office of the VPRI may encourage teams to consolidate.

PHASE 2 - FULL APPLICATION

Full application packages must be emailed to vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca by **September 16, 2022, at 4:00 PM**. Sign-off from the Department Head and the Dean for the Lead and Co-Lead (if applicable) is required for the full application. An RPIF is not required at this stage.

Cluster applicants are invited to submit a proposal that describes how three years of Eminence funding will be deployed to establish 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 (use form provided)
- A free-form proposal addressing the evaluation criteria (4-pages maximum)
 - Applicants must explain how UBC's strategic priorities and commitments are integrated into appropriate aspects of the proposal. If not applicable, briefly explain why.
- Annual budgets and justification (use template provided).
 - 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.
- A short-form CV for each Cluster Member (2-pages maximum, each)
 - Short-form CV guidelines: Name, Education, Professional Appointments, and a relevant selection of Awards, Honors, Invited Talks (last 10 years), Grants presently held, and Publications (last 5 years).



- **Renewals** - Applicants who are an existing Cluster are asked to address the Special Criteria for Renewals described in the Evaluation Criteria section below (additional 2-pages maximum)
- **Resubmissions** - Applicants who were unsuccessful from previous competition cycles and are resubmitting a proposal may include a response to reviewers (additional 1-page maximum)

Free-form proposals must be written using a 12-point black font, single line spacing, using standard, 1" margins on an 8.5" x 11" page layout. Figures and tables are included in page limits.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The Eminence Program evaluation criteria have been updated to reflect best practices in promoting interdisciplinary research and unbiased evaluation.

Applicants need to address how UBC's strategic priorities and commitments identified in the Indigenous Strategic Plan, the Inclusion Action Plan, and the Aspire Strategic Plan, are appropriately considered and integrated into aspects of the Cluster such as the research theme, research design, research process, the team, the environment, the operations, the budget, etc. If it is not applicable, briefly explain why.

THEME – PROPOSED RESEARCH, IMPORTANCE, IMPACT, & INTERDISCIPLINARITY (50%)

Evaluation Criteria:

- The societal problems, issues, and/or research questions that the Cluster will address
- The anticipated goals and outcomes, and the significance
- The potential for impact, relative to the research theme and discipline
- An explanation of why an interdisciplinary approach is required to achieve the anticipated research outcomes

CAPABILITY – PEOPLE & PARTNERSHIPS (30%)

Evaluation Criteria:

- The interdisciplinary diversity of the cluster
- The individual and collective expertise in the subject area
- The articulation of the roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each Cluster Member
- The role(s) of Cluster Collaborators and/or other non-academic partners, how they will contribute, and how they will benefit
- The leadership experience of the Cluster Lead(s)

FEASIBILITY – PLAN, METHODS & BUDGET (20%)

Evaluation Criteria:

- The specific plans, including timelines and activities, that will advance the goals of the Cluster
- The research methods that will be used
- The degree to which interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research will be undertaken
- Budget justification (using template provided)



RENEWALS - Evaluation Criteria as above and:

- Clear evidence that the Cluster has met goals and expectations articulated in the initial Eminence application
- Demonstration that Cluster activities have resulted in securing new external funding sources

ELIGIBILITY OF BUDGET REQUESTS

The budget should reflect activities to establish and advance the Cluster. Not all successful applications will be fully funded; those that receive partial funding will be required to submit a revised budget for VPRI approval prior to the funding start date.

Using the template provided, provide a breakdown of costs, their category, and a clear justification for costs associated with each category. Expenses must comply with [UBC Business Expenses](#) rules and [TAGFA guidelines](#). They must also adhere to the additional limitations specified below.

Eligible Expenses:

Cluster-Building Activities

- Cluster meetings, workshops, and/or conferences
- Community and stakeholder engagement costs
- Travel for Cluster Members and Cluster Collaborators
- Pilot studies and associated research supplies

Cluster Operating Activities

- Salary costs for a Cluster administrator/coordinator
- Postdoctoral stipends and/or top-ups
- Undergraduate and graduate student stipends and/or top-ups
- Research supplies (including consumables) that support the Cluster's interdisciplinary research activities
- Training of Cluster Members, Cluster Collaborators, and HQP
- Critical shared research equipment or tools that are necessary for the interdisciplinary research activities of the Cluster (one-time, to a maximum of \$75,000)
- Faculty or trainee recruitment visits (annual maximum of \$2500 per Cluster)
- Knowledge translation costs

Non-Eligible:

- Furniture
- Renovations
- Course releases

ADJUDICATION PROCESS

An interdisciplinary 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 funding decisions are made by the Provost and VPRI.

Note that while the review panel members are established researchers with varied areas of expertise, applicants cannot rely on the committee being knowledgeable in the applicant's specialized area of research and are encouraged to use non-technical language understandable to researchers in other fields.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Term of the Grant: The term of the grant is for three years.

Budget Changes: Clusters should connect with the Program Contact to discuss any major changes prior to incurring expenses. Changes to the budget must be justified and have a positive impact on the planned cluster-building and research activities of the cluster. Cluster Members are responsible for ensuring costs uphold the TAGFA Guidelines, UBC Business Expenses rules, and the list of Eminence program eligible expenses.

Financial Terms: Funding for years two and three are conditional upon receipt and approval of an annual report. A template will be provided. Financial distribution for Year 2 and Year 3 is contingent on satisfactory progress towards activities, goals, milestones, and outcomes articulated in the proposal.

At the end of the annual term, Eminence-funded accounts must amount to less than 25% of the annual award. Subsequent funding will not be provided until this threshold is met.

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 of up to one year may be granted at the discretion of the VPRI.

Reporting: 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 each year to the VPRI. A template for the annual report will be provided.

PROGRAM CONTACT

For any questions or concerns regarding this program, please contact:

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