



CATALYST GRANT

Terms of reference and application process

The Killam Research Fund supports research that aligns with the University's and the Killam Trusts' priorities to promote and achieve **Research Excellence** by increasing external funding, attract and retain **Research Talent** by funding research at all career stages, and advance **Institutional Research Goals** (i.e., [Forward with Purpose](#)) by building capacity for the large-scale, interdisciplinary research required to compete in the university's areas of global excellence and growth.

Supported by the Killam Research Fund, Catalyst Grants are designed to assist in fostering interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral partnerships with existing and/or new organizational partners to co-create and share knowledge in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences, including but not limited to, Business, Education, Fine Arts, Indigenous Studies, or Law. Please refer to the Eligibility section for the definition of a partnership. This program prepares researchers to apply, or re-apply, for external partnership-focused funding such as Partnership Engage Grants (PEG), SSHRC Partnership Development Grant (PDG), Partnership Grants (PG), or equivalent.

There are three funding streams researchers can apply for:

1. Catalyst Small Seed Grant (\$5,000 - \$15,000)

- a. **Purpose:** To provide short-term and timely support for smaller-scale partnered research activities to be competitive for external funding. May support the initial stages of fostering new research partnerships or address the emerging needs of existing partners that are distinct from any previous/ongoing partnership activities.
- b. **Duration:** Maximum 1 year.

2. Catalyst Large Seed Grant (up to \$50,000)

- a. **Purpose:** To provide longer-term and larger-scale support for new and existing partnered research activities that, due to their scope, require a larger investment to be competitive for external funding. Supports resource-intensive activities, distinct from any previous/ongoing partnership activities, such as formulating national or international partnerships, establishing networks for research activities, or conducting large-scale partnered knowledge mobilization to build institutional or inter-institutional research capacity in an area of strategic priority as noted in Forward with Purpose.
- b. **Duration:** Maximum 2 years.

3. Catalyst Bridge Grant (up to \$25,000)

- a. **Purpose:** Provides funding to strengthen and resubmit unsuccessful applications for partnership projects that have a clearly demonstrated need for research funds to address reviewer feedback in order to enhance external funding success. Funds should be used to prepare for a re-submission to the same external peer-reviewed program. Any exceptions need to be approved in advance.
- b. **Duration:** Maximum 1 year.

Eligibility

- Applications must propose research with interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral partnerships to co-create and share knowledge in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences.
- Partnerships are defined as informal or formal collaborative agreements between applicants and one or more external partner organizations (from academic, public, private, or not-for-profit sectors) designed to achieve shared research goals. Funding can be requested for both existing and/or new partnerships.
- Catalyst grants are meant to support applications being led by University of Alberta researchers; therefore, the Catalyst PI also needs to be the PI on the external funding application(s).
- Primary applicant eligibility for funding is typically restricted to tenure/tenure-track faculty. Please refer to the University of Alberta Policies and Procedures Online (UAPPOL) document entitled "[Eligibility to Apply for and Hold Research Funding Policy](#)".
- Graduate students are not eligible to apply.
- Successful applicants must wait two fiscal years from the award date before applying for another Catalyst Grant. Unsuccessful applications may be resubmitted in the next funding cycle.
- Funding can be used to support partnership-building and/or research-related partnership activities, including, but not limited to:
 - Salaries, including graduate/undergraduate research assistants
 - Minor equipment, materials and supplies
 - Travel and hosting for partnership engagement (e.g., partner meetings, honoraria, co-design activities, governance meeting, site visits)
 - Knowledge mobilization activities and products (i.e., events, digital/print outputs, and targeted dissemination travel)
 - Other direct research expenditures (e.g., professional/technical services, digital tools and data management, training costs, participant

remuneration/incentives etc.)

- Teaching release will be considered an eligible expense on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Dean and, where applicable, in consultation with the Chair. A letter of support is required to verify that appropriate approvals are in place.
- Funding for indirect research costs, supplemental or top-up funding for existing projects, costs covered by other internal or external funds, ongoing operation and maintenance costs, and grant preparation and grant writing costs are not eligible.
- The Catalyst Grant may be used to support budget items that are also included as part of the cash contributions in an external grant application, provided this use complies with the external funder's rules. Its award is not contingent on external funding results. For projects where the primary intent is to secure institutional matching (e.g., required or contingent matching commitments), please apply through the [Strategic Research Initiatives Fund](#) (SRIF).
 - Where Catalyst funds are proposed as part of a matching package for an external application, this should ideally be planned and disclosed at the time of application with a clear, non- duplicative budget across all sources.
- The Catalyst Grant is intended to build toward externally funded research partnerships and can be used in conjunction with other internal or external funding programs (such as the [KIAS Cluster Grants](#), [SRIF Seed Grants](#), [SSHRC PG Stage 1](#), partnership contributions, etc.) in order to support broader research-related activities for new or emerging partnerships.
 - Applicants are not required to have all other sources of funding confirmed at the time of application. However, where the target external opportunity requires or strongly encourages partner contributions (e.g., SSHRC Partnership Development or Partnership Grants), applicants must outline a clear and feasible plan to secure the required cash and/or in-kind contributions over the term of the grant.
 - If multiple funding sources will be used to support the partnership activities, a clear budget for each source is required to verify that there is no duplication of financial support for identical budget items. Letters of support or emails of intent should be provided where available to confirm anticipated amounts and types of contributions.
- Catalyst Seed Grant recipients are expected to submit a new application to an external funder within one year of the project end date.
- Catalyst Bridge Grant recipients are expected to resubmit a new application to the same funder within one year of the award date.

Application process

To apply, log in using your CCID to submit an [Application Form](#). An [application working copy](#) is available to work on your responses offline before submission. Only applications that are approved for funding need to be submitted for approval through the Researcher Home Page. Submission instructions will be included in the funding notification.

Applicants are encouraged to include specific actions to advance institutional strategic goals and objectives, such as those indicated in [Shape: A Strategic Plan of Impact](#), [Forward with Purpose: A Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation](#), [Changing the Story: An Integrated Action Plan](#), and [Braiding Past, Present and Future: University of Alberta Indigenous Strategic Plan](#).

All applications must outline steps to build a diverse team and inclusive research environment (see the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Research Resource Page](#)).

Selection process

The Catalyst Grant is adjudicated by a committee chaired by the Vice-President (Research) or delegate. The committee includes up to five members from the university's research community who are suitably representative of the institution's diversity and who conduct research in the designated fields of Humanities and Social Sciences, including Business, Education, Fine Arts, Indigenous Studies, or Law. All adjudicators complete Unconscious Bias training.

The following criteria will be taken into consideration when adjudicating applications:

- **Challenge** - The aim and importance of the endeavour:
 - Originality, significance and expected contribution of the partnership to the designated fields.
 - Potential of partnership to have influence and impact¹ within and/or beyond the academic community.
 - Activity aligns well with the University's and Killam Trusts' priorities.
- **Feasibility** - The plan to achieve excellence:
 - Quality and genuineness of the interdisciplinary and/or inter-sectoral partnership and associated governance arrangements in relation to the proposed activities.
 - Quality of the equity, diversity and inclusion plan for promoting a diverse team, inclusive working environment and equitable opportunities within the partnership.

¹ [Forward with Purpose](#) defines impact broadly and inclusively to recognize the validity of different dimensions and interpretations of impact across disciplines, research programs and all related scholarly activities. These include short- and long-term economic, environmental and social impacts and engagements. See the [Declaration on Research Assessment](#).

- Appropriateness of the proposed timeline and probability that the objectives will be met.
- Appropriateness of the requested budget and quality of justification for proposed costs. If there is more than one source of funding, a contribution plan for each contributor is required along with a letter of support verifying the contribution. If funding is being requested for a teaching release, the budget justification should tie the request to the scope, relationship- building demands, and overall workload of the partnership.
- Quality and appropriateness of knowledge mobilization plans, including effective dissemination, exchange and engagement with interestholders within and/or beyond the research community, where applicable.
- **Capability** - The expertise to succeed:
 - Quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published and/or creative outputs of the applicant and partners relative to their roles in the partnership and to their respective stages of career.
 - Past experience in formal partnerships.
- **External Funding Plan** - The sustainability of the partnership:
 - Clear and specific plan demonstrating that external funding to support the partnership will be sought. Applications must identify specific external funding agencies and programs, provide realistic submission timelines, and explain how the Catalyst Research Grant will position the team for success in these competitions.
 - The Killam Research Fund should not be considered a substitute for applications to federal, provincial or other peer-reviewed research granting agencies (e.g., SSHRC).

Demand for funds typically exceeds the available funding, so not all meritorious projects can be supported. Priority will be given to the following applicants:

- New and junior faculty to support research partnerships
- Indigenous faculty and faculty in equity-denied groups²
- Partnerships that demonstrate strong and substantive interdisciplinary and/or cross-sectoral engagement (for example, teams spanning multiple disciplines, faculties, and/or sectors)
- Proven senior or mid-career scholars with solid publication records seeking support to develop new partnerships or new directions within existing partnerships

² [Forward with Purpose](#) indicates that equity-denied groups also include women, visible minorities, researchers from Black, 2SLGBTQ+, francophone and diasporic communities, and persons with disabilities or who identify as disabled.

- Applicants who have not received previous grants from the Killam Research Fund (Knowledge Mobilization, Cornerstone, or Catalyst)

Grant Administration

- All conditions (such as [Research Ethics](#)) on awards must be cleared within six months from the award date, unless an exemption from this requirement is sought and obtained from the Office of the Vice-President (Research). Requests for exemption should be sent to killamresearchfund@ualberta.ca with justification for the request. If this guideline is not met, the award will expire.
- Awardees grant the OVPR and the Killam Trusts the right to publish the name of the PI, Project Title, and amount of funding received. This information may be used to manage administration of the researcher's grant funding and Killam reporting purposes.
- The OVPR and Killam Trusts must be acknowledged in communications, publications and conferences arising from funded research, and on equipment or facilities purchased or developed with funds.
- Recipients must notify killamresearchfund@ualberta.ca if they have or will receive funding from another source for the same project or scope of work, providing justification for why Killam funds are required beyond other funding received.
- Any funds remaining at the end of the project term will be returned to the source.
- One-time extensions of up to one year may be requested through the internal research funding coordinator. Please send an email to killamresearchfund@ualberta.ca to initiate the extension.
- The PI must submit a final report to killamresearchfund@ualberta.ca within 30 days of the project's end date, explaining how funds were spent to support the project. Recipients who do not meet the final report deadline are ineligible to receive future funding until the outstanding report has been submitted. Reporting templates will be provided, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - How your project has helped advance the University of Alberta's and the Killam Trusts' priorities to promote and achieve **Research Excellence** by increasing external funding, attract and retain **Research Talent** by funding research at all career stages, and advance **Institutional Research Goals** (i.e., [Forward with Purpose](#)).
 - How partnerships were developed or strengthened through this project, including: new or deepened relationships with partners; governance or co-creation processes established; and how partners were involved meaningfully in designing, conducting, or mobilizing the research.
 - Summary of funded activities, including how they have resulted in revenue generation from external funding sources or improved the competitiveness of the project for future funding applications.

- Any other outcomes resulting from your projects, such as new knowledge, models, policy, practices, training and mentorship of students, or innovation and commercialization of products.

Submission Deadlines

Intake of applications will normally occur twice each fiscal year (Summer and Fall). Upcoming deadlines are as follows:

Application Deadline	Adjudication Period	Notice of Results
July 3, 2026	July 6 – August 21, 2026	August 28, 2026
November 6, 2026	November 9 – December 11, 2026	December 18, 2026

Records from this competition will be managed in accordance with the [Access to Information Act](#) (ATIA) and [Protection of Privacy Act](#) (POPA).