

Memo

To: Deans

Cc: Associate Deans of Research

From: Amir Asif, Vice-President Research & Innovation

Date: April 4, 2022

Subject: Catalyzing Interdisciplinary Research Clusters – 2nd Round

Introduction

The Office of the Vice-President Research and Innovation (VPRI) is pleased to announce the second round of the Catalyzing Interdisciplinary Research Clusters initiative, the details of which are presented below.

This information should be circulated to your respective Research Offices and faculty members.

Program Overview

This initiative is designed to strengthen interdisciplinary research clusters in areas of strategic importance. Funding from this program will enable globally leading research excellence and world-class training opportunities, and serve as a catalyst to help secure future large-scale follow-on funding through federal, provincial or other external research funding programs, including the [Canada Excellence Research Chairs](#), the [Canada First Research Excellence Fund](#), and the [New Frontiers in Research Fund Transformation stream](#).

In doing so, it will scale the development of research teams and clusters to position the University as a key node in national and international networks in strategic areas of interest, while enabling impactful contributions towards the University's [Strategic Research Plan](#), the [University Academic Plan](#), and the [United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Eligibility

For the purpose of this initiative, an interdisciplinary project is defined as one that crosses the mandate of at least two of the three federal research funding councils (CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC) and includes members from at least two Faculties.

A cluster must include a team of at least 5 researchers, one of whom must be an early career researcher. Early career researchers are defined as individuals who, as of 2022, have five years or less experience since their first academic appointment, with the exception of career interruptions (e.g., maternity or parental leave, extended sick leave, clinical training and family care) that occurred after their appointment. For all leaves except professional leaves (such as training-related, sabbatical, and administrative-related leaves), the five-year window is extended by twice the time interruption taken.



Available Funding & Research Themes

Selected projects will receive \$150k/year over three years from the Office of the Vice-President Research & Innovation. Participating Faculties will collectively contribute an additional \$25k/year (minimum) per project. A total of up to 10 projects are expected to be funded in this round.

Funds are to be used for direct costs of research, with not more than 20% used for equipment. In all cases, the use of funds is to be governed by all relevant York policies.

In alignment with the University Academic Plan, the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) will serve as the eligible research themes. Applicants will self-select SDGs which best align with their proposal. There is no predetermined target around the number of funded projects per research theme.

Application Process

Applicants are advised to read the accompanying FAQ as they work to develop their submission.

Step 1 – Notice of Intent

Each team will designate a Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI) for their proposal, to serve as the corresponding applicant and administrative lead.

The NPI's Faculty Research Office will submit the Notice of Intent (NOI) fillable pdf form by **4:30 pm on May 9, 2022** to roseman@yorku.ca. Faculties submitting more than one NOI are asked to include a memo which prioritizes the submissions.

Depending on the volume of submissions, the NOI may be adjudicated. Regardless, it will be used for administrative purposes to secure external peer reviewers and to inform membership on an internal review committee for adjudication of the full application.

The Vice-President Research & Innovation may share the NOIs with the York community and use them to facilitate discussions amongst groups with similar proposals in order to explore opportunities for joint submissions.

Step 2 – Full Application

The NPI's Faculty Research Office will submit the full application in pdf format by **4:30 pm on July 29, 2022** to roseman@yorku.ca.

The full application includes the full application pdf form and a free form pdf document, which may include figures, tables or diagrams where appropriate, so long as it adheres to the following formatting criteria:

1. Pages must be 8 ½" x 11".
2. Text must be single-spaced, with no more than 6 lines of type per inch.
3. All text must be in 11 pt Arial black font.
4. Margins must be set at a minimum of 3/4" (1.87 cm).
5. Pages must be numbered sequentially.

The free form document must contain only the following sections (i.e., no appendices):

Section	Contents	Length
Context and Alignment with Research Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly describe and contextualize your research proposal and explain why it is best addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective. • Comment on the alignment of your research with your research theme(s) and on anticipated contributions to the University Academic Plan, the Strategic Research Plan, and the UN SDGs. 	1 Page
Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of confirmed team members, explaining how their expertise contributes to the required interdisciplinary approach. • Identify anticipated contributions of each team member and explain how their contributions will be coordinated and integrated. • Clearly demonstrate a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), explaining what actions will be undertaken to remove barriers to the recruitment, meaningful engagement, and full participation of individuals from underrepresented groups and at various career stages. 	2 Pages
Research Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the proposed research project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what makes it original, innovative and of high quality ○ the proposed methodology, including research strategies and key activities ○ the short-, medium- and long-term objectives and expected outcomes ○ how interdisciplinary perspectives will be applied and integrated • Indicate how GBA+/SGBA considerations have informed the research design, or if not, provide a rationale as to why no aspect of the proposed research would benefit from such an analysis. • Provide a workplan with a timeline. 	4 Pages
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on the type (e.g., Postdoctoral Fellow, PhD student, etc.) and approximate number of highly qualified personnel that would be trained throughout the research project. Briefly indicate how the training and mentoring of each group will be handled. • Describe how an environment informed by EDI considerations has been or will be created to attract, develop, and retain trainees. 	2 Pages

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the specific roles and responsibilities of trainees and indicate the duties, especially with respect to research, that they will be undertaking and how these will complement their academic training and develop their research expertise. 	
Impact and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the anticipated scholarly and societal impacts of the project, articulating the anticipated benefit and significance for Canadians and beyond, if applicable. Explain your knowledge mobilization plan, including the expected contributions/activities of partner and/or end user organizations, including people with lived experience as appropriate. Outline your follow-on funding plans, referencing specific large-scale research grants where applicable. 	1 Page
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an explanation of the costs of your project and provide a breakdown of expenses using the accompanying Excel template. 	1 Page + Excel Template
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add any relevant references to support your proposal. 	No page limit

2021 Recipients of Interim (Bridge) Funding

In addition to the above requirements, applicants who received one-year interim (bridge) funding of \$75,000 for their 2021 application are asked to include in their full application submission a one-page description of their activities and progress to date.

Adjudication

Full applications will be sent for external peer review by domain experts. Those reviews will help inform the internal adjudication, which will assess all submissions and provide recommendations to the Vice-President Research & Innovation on projects for funding.

The evaluation criteria used by the internal committee in its assessment includes:

- Research excellence
- Anticipated ability to scale development of research teams and clusters
- EDI considerations – across the team, training, and research program
- Anticipated impact/progress within 3-year timeframe
- Likelihood to pursue and secure follow-on funding

Annual Reporting

All funded projects will be required to submit annual progress reports to the Office of the Vice-President Research & Innovation.

Process Timeline

The full timeline is presented in the table below.

Date	Milestone
April 4, 2022	Call for Proposals launched
May 9, 2022 @ 4:30 pm	Notices of Intent due to roseman@yorku.ca
July 29, 2022 @ 4:30 pm	Full Applications due to roseman@yorku.ca
August	Full Applications out for peer review
Mid-September	Internal Review Committee
Late September	Recommendations to Vice-President Research & Innovation
Early October	Funding decisions announced

Contact

For more information, please contact:

Mark Roseman
Director, Strategic and Institutional Research Initiatives (SIRI)
Office of Research Services
roseman@yorku.ca

**Full Application
Catalyzing Interdisciplinary Research Clusters
Summer 2022**

To be submitted by Faculty Research Offices to roseman@yorku.ca by 4:30 pm on July 29, 2022

Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI): _____
NPI's Faculty: _____
NPI's Primary Funding Council: _____
NPI's Email: _____

Application Title: _____

Select your primary (P) and secondary (S) research themes below. Click on any research theme for more details.

P <input type="checkbox"/>	1 NO POVERTY 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	2 ZERO HUNGER 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 
S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>	
P <input type="checkbox"/>	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 
S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>	
P <input type="checkbox"/>	13 CLIMATE ACTION 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	15 LIFE ON LAND 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 		
S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>			

Authorized Signature

As the Associate Dean Research (ADR) of the Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI), I agree that my Faculty will serve as the administrative lead for this application. This includes confirming that other Faculties are aware and supportive of their faculty member’s participation in this application, and if successful, coordinating/managing Faculty commitments towards the Full Application.

ADR’s Signature

Faculty

_____/_____/_____
Day Month Year

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Catalyzing Interdisciplinary Research Clusters

Roles and Eligibility

- What is the role of the Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI)?
 - The NPI is expected to coordinate the financial and administrative aspects of the grant, serve as the corresponding applicant, and lead the intellectual direction and conduct of the proposed activities.
- What is the role of a Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI)?
 - A Co-PI shares responsibility with the NPI for the intellectual direction of the proposed activities and plays a significant role in the conduct of the research.
- What is the role of a co-applicant?
 - A co-applicant contributes to the execution of the research project.
- Is there a limit to the number of applications I can be involved with?
 - You should only be NPI or Co-PI on a single application. There are no limits as a co-applicant, provided you have capacity.
- Can adjunct faculty participate?
 - Yes, but they cannot be the NPI.
- Can an ORU be a co-applicant?
 - Co-applicants have to be people, but they could be affiliated with an ORU.

Teams & Partners

- Is there a limit to the number of team members?
 - No, but there must be at least 5, including at least one early-career researcher (within 5 years of first academic appointment).
- What is a cluster?
 - A cluster is a group of at least 5 researchers, one of which must be an early career researcher. There is no need for the cluster to have a defined mandate.
- Should I have international partners?
 - The team composition (including partners) should ensure the right mixture of expertise and experience to accomplish the proposed research agenda. If international partners serve that purpose, then that's fine, but it isn't a requirement.

Budget

- What could the \$25k/yr Faculty contribution be used for?
 - The \$25k/yr contribution should be incremental (new) funding, and could be used for HQP support, course release, research grant funding, etc.
- How is the \$25k/yr to be split across participating Faculties?
 - It is left to the participating Faculties to negotiate this, but it is generally expected that each Faculty's contribution should be commensurate with their degree of participation. The NPI's Faculty should take the lead in coordinating Faculty contributions.
- Can the funds be spent on anything? Anywhere?
 - Funds should be spent on direct costs of research, with no more than 20% spent on infrastructure. There is an expectation that funds will be spent at York.

Notice of Intent

- Are external reviewers external to York, or to my Faculty?
 - External reviewers should be external to York and must be arms-length from the team. That is, there should be no [conflict of interest](#).

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- What resources are available to help me to incorporate Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) considerations into my application?
 - Recommended resources include [Best Practices in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research](#) from the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) website, and a Research Commons [discussion on by Dr. Rebecca Pillai Riddell \(starting at 1:15:14\)](#).
- How can I obtain some information about the diversity of my team?
 - A Diversity Composition Report provides consolidated, de-identified information on the representation of equity seeking groups within your team. The report can be requested at <https://research.apps01.yorku.ca/machform/view.php?id=41988>

Submission Process

- Which Faculty should submit the NOI/Full Application?
 - The NPI's Faculty should submit the NOI/full application.
- Do I need a signed ORS Checklist?
 - No ORS Checklist is required.

Additional questions should be directed to roseman@yorku.ca

Notice of Intent Catalyzing Interdisciplinary Research Clusters Spring 2022

To be submitted by Faculty Research Offices to roseman@yorku.ca by 4:30 pm on May 9, 2022

Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI): _____

NPI's Faculty: _____

NPI's Primary Funding Council: _____

NPI's Email: _____

Application Title: _____

Select your primary (P) and secondary (S) research themes below. Click on any research theme for more details.

P <input type="checkbox"/>	1 NO POVERTY 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	2 ZERO HUNGER 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	5 GENDER EQUALITY 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION
S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>	
P <input type="checkbox"/>	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	P <input type="checkbox"/>	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>	
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S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>		S <input type="checkbox"/>			

Team (excluding NPI)

Role	Name	Faculty	Primary Funding Council	Early Career (Y/N)

Research Proposal

Provide a brief (500 word) summary of your research proposal.

External Reviewers

On the following two pages please list six potential external reviewers who are widely respected within their field and **not in a conflict of interest** (see definition below).

- External reviewers, who may be from Canada or abroad, should be able to evaluate the application in the language in which it is written.
- Note that external reviewers **must not** be contacted by applicants or their Faculties.
- VPRI may request the names of additional reviewers if required and reserves the right to make the final selection of external reviewers for any application.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a conflict between a person's duties and responsibilities with regard to the review process, and that person's private, professional, business or public interests. There may be a real, perceived or potential conflict of interest when the external reviewer:

- would receive professional or personal benefit resulting from the application being reviewed;
- has a professional or personal relationship with the applicant or the applicant's institution; or
- has a direct or indirect financial interest in the application being reviewed.

External reviewers are in a conflict of interest if they:

- are a relative or close friend, or have a personal relationship with the applicant;
- are in a position to gain or lose financially/materially from the funding of the application;
- have had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the applicant;
- are currently affiliated with the applicant's primary institution, organization or company — including research hospitals and research institutes;
- were the applicant's PhD supervisor;
- are closely professionally affiliated with the applicant, as a result of having **in the last six years**:
 - frequent and regular interactions with the applicant in the course of their duties at their department, institution, organization or company;
 - been a supervisor or a trainee of the applicant;
 - collaborated, published or shared funding with the applicant, or have plans to do so in the immediate future;
 - been employed by the nominating institution; and/or
 - feel for any reason unable to provide an impartial review of the application.

External Reviewer 1

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Address:

City:

Country:

Email:

Telephone:

Area(s) of Expertise:

External Reviewer 2

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Address:

City:

Country:

Email:

Telephone:

Area(s) of Expertise:

External Reviewer 3

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Address:

City:

Country:

Email:

Telephone:

Area(s) of Expertise:

External Reviewer 4

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Address:

City:

Country:

Email:

Telephone:

Area(s) of Expertise:

External Reviewer 5

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Address:

City:

Country:

Email:

Telephone:

Area(s) of Expertise:

External Reviewer 6

Name:

Position:

Institution:

Address:

City:

Country:

Email:

Telephone:

Area(s) of Expertise:

Authorized Signature

As the Associate Dean Research (ADR) of the Nominated Principal Investigator (NPI), I agree that my Faculty will serve as the administrative lead for this application. This includes responsibility for submission of the Notice of Intent and Full Application to VPRI, confirming that other Faculties are aware and supportive of their faculty member’s participation in this application, and if successful, coordinating/managing Faculty commitments towards the Full Application.

ADR’s Signature

Faculty

_____/_____/_____
Day Month Year

