## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Catalyst Grants program is designed to catalyze research initiatives that lead to substantial external research grant funding opportunities. Catalyst Grants are intended to support well-defined, early stage, research-related activities. Catalytic funding is distinguished from other forms of support such as start-up or bridge funding by its brief duration (requiring a well-crafted strategy), highly targeted aims (researchers identify an ambitious funding opportunity for which catalyst funding will position them for success), and emphasis on a practical plan to leverage existing resources and contributions (financial or in-kind).

Catalyst Grants can support current research programs as well as exploration of new research questions and/or approaches that are distinct from the applicant's existing work. **A firm expectation of the program is that all recipients submit external grant applications linked to the Catalyst Grant award and its associated work.**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Value of the Award:** $1,000 - $15,000. For larger scale projects, applicants are strongly advised to obtain and include partner contributions from other sources (including departments, faculties, institutes, and/or external partners).

**Duration of the Award**: The default length of all awards is six (6) months. If delays are experienced, no-cost extensions may be granted up to an additional six (6) months. Any unspent funds remaining after twelve (12) months return automatically to the Office of the Vice-President (Research). No other extension requests will be granted without formal documentation of an interruption to research duties.

An individual may not submit, as principal applicant, more than one application per intake. Grant recipients may only hold one (1) Catalyst Grant at a time as the principal applicant. Individuals can serve as co-applicant on any number of applications or active grants under this program.

**Before requesting a new Catalyst Grant, prior recipients must have submitted the external grant applications identified in a previous Catalyst Grant.** Recipients must show that a funding request for the research proposed in their Catalyst Grant project has been formally submitted to the external sponsor identified there and provide confirmation to Research Services (evidence of submission only; funder decisions are not required).

Although emphasis is placed on tri-agency funding requests, other requests for major

funding that target any external granting agency including government, foundations, industry, or non-profit organizations are eligible and welcome.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Individuals holding continuing academic appointments (tenured and tenure-track) with explicit independent research duties are eligible. Individuals holding limited term, contingent term, or adjunct  appointments are eligible provided the terms of their appointment explicitly include the expectation of independent research and/or the supervision of graduate students. Evidence of appointment terms may be requested.

## **DEADLINES**

Applications for Catalyst Grants will be accepted on a quarterly basis with up to 30% of the funding envelope available for allocation at each deadline. Annual deadlines are:

| Annual Deadlines | Start Dates |
|---|---|
| November 15 | December 15 |
| February 15 | March 15 |
| May 15 | June 15 |
| August 15 | September 15 |

## **CONDITIONS**

Catalyst Grant Awards are intended for early phase activities that can be completed swiftly (ideally in under six months) and increase competitiveness for external funding requests. Unspent funds will be recovered by the Office of the Vice-President (Research) after twelve months. Extensions requested on the basis of a  formally documented leave where research duties are interrupted (e.g. medical or family-related leave) may be granted for a period equal to the leave. Requests must be submitted no later than three months before the award end date.

To be considered for subsequent Catalyst Grant applications, applicants must have completed their most recent active Catalyst Grant and have submitted an Annual Outcomes Report to Research Services that includes the following information in the template provided:

- Expenditures incurred
- Current Status of the Project including details regarding external funding applications submitted, their status, any funding received, and next steps in the program of work.
- Any additional information on outputs and impacts associated with the funding, including publications, presentations, funding applications, honors/recognition, trainees involved, partnerships established or strengthened, etc. -- recognizing that institutional expectation for such downstream outcomes is realistically modest given the early stage work being supported by the Catalyst Fund).

Applicants who have not submitted an Annual Outcomes Report will not be considered

for further Catalyst Grant funding.

## USE OF FUNDS

Expense eligibility is generally governed by institutional policy and procedure (i.e. the [Travel and Expense Reimbursement Handbook](#)) and program aims.

Examples of eligible costs include:
- Research personnel including research assistants, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, project managers, lab managers, technicians, etc.
- Grant writing support
- Third Party Consulting Fees
- Fees paid and gifts for the purpose of participant recruitment
- Fees paid and gifts to research participants
- Subcontract costs
- Network meeting expenses including travel, meals and accommodation (the application must clearly define the explicit networking purpose that advances the research)
- Travel expenses related to research or fieldwork
- Collection of pilot data
- Materials and supplies
- Research equipment, including computers

Examples of ineligible costs include:
- Principal investigator fees or remuneration
- Travel for dissemination or conference activities
- Entertainment
- Hospitality expenses, including alcohol

## EVALUATION

Applications will be reviewed and adjudicated by an internal review committee established by the Office of the Vice-President (Research).

## REVIEW CRITERIA

The review committee will consider:

1. The extent to which the proposed area of work is compelling, and how impactful the downstream funding applications will be (to the principal investigator's career trajectory, to the university, to society).
2. The extent to which a concrete body of work is being proposed for Catalyst

Funding, as a logical progression to a compelling external funding application.

3. The extent to which the proposed work is a fit for the principal investigator, and the other work that they do.

4. The extent to which the principal investigator is presenting a winning research context (i.e. presence of mentorship, strong collaborators, knowledge translation partnerships that will help advance the program).

The evaluation process will be undertaken in a formative manner. In cases where applications are not selected for funding, the internal review committee will provide clear direction as to how resubmissions may be improved upon and research team(s) restructured such that their chances of success are greater in future competitions.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The following additional aspects (in order of importance) will be considered in the review process:

- Whether applications demonstrate a need for funding (i.e. includes only those budget items that are critical for the success of the project.). Depending on the program's budget envelope, smaller requests may be easier to fund than larger requests;

- Whether applications include matching funds and/or are leveraged with other contributions including in-kind contributions;
- Whether applications lead to external grant submissions to the tri-agencies.

While all eligible faculty members are encouraged to apply, applications from early career researchers may be ranked higher in relation to mid-career and senior scholars. New applicants to the Catalyst Grants Program may also be ranked higher than those applicants who have received Catalyst Grant funding in the past.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Applicants must clearly demonstrate their commitment to EDI in their research teams, including among students, postdoctoral fellows, co-PIs, co-applicants and/or collaborators, as applicable. They must explain what actions they will take, the outcomes expected, and the assessment planned for each of the following three key areas:

- team composition and recruitment processes;
- training and development opportunities; and
- inclusion.

Actions taken are expected to remove barriers and provide opportunities for the meaningful integration of individuals from all equity-seeking groups including, but not limited to, women, racialized minorities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and persons from LGBTQ2+

communities.

Applicants are strongly advised to consult resources and strategic guidance available through the Offices of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Indigenous Engagement and through their faculties and departments.

Applicants are also encouraged to use the EDI statement to convey any relevant information about career interruptions they wish to mention. This information is very important in assessing the fourth review criterion.


## APPLICATION ITEMS

1) Approvals page (until the application can be migrated to RMS);
2) Project description (not to exceed 3 pages) including a demonstrated need for funding. (The project description should emphasize the over-riding strategy of the grant proposal and downstream funding applications rather than the methodological approach).
3) A description (one page maximum) of how the Catalyst Grant activities will enhance the chances for success of the external funding request, taking care to address the fourth review criterion above;
4) Budget and budget justification including leveraged contributions;
5) EDI statement (one page maximum) including relevant explanations of any significant career interruptions;
6) Curriculum Vitae of the principal applicant (any format) and, if applicable, a team biosketch up to one page total length describing the profile and project role of each co-applicant, preceding the principal applicant's CV (co-applicant CVs should not be included).


Please assemble your application items in the order as listed here. Application items must be typed single spaced, Times New Roman font size 11 or equivalent. Curriculum vitae may be any format and there is no restriction on career period. A single, digitally generated and text-searchable PDF attachment with all items included in order is required.


## SUBMISSION PROCESS

The application package will include the endorsement of the relevant Department Head and Associate (Dean) Research. Applications will be submitted online.