
Terms of Reference

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Transdisciplinary Scholarship Connector Grants program is designed to promote initiatives that enable UCalgary teams to explore questions, challenges and opportunities that demand a transdisciplinary approach. Connector Grant funding is distinguished from other forms of support such as start-up, bridge, or Catalyst Grant funding by its focus on fostering new, transdisciplinary connections among scholars, trainees, and external partners.

As UCalgary works to further define Transdisciplinary Scholarship with input from the University community at large, the following working definition provided by a working group on *Transdisciplinary Scholarship and Areas of Focus* provides guidance in determining eligible activities under the Connector Grant program:

“Scholarship built around problems, opportunities, and possibilities, not professions. People from multiple backgrounds working together on challenges. Transdisciplinary scholarship focusses on building knowledge between, across and beyond traditional disciplines. In a complex time of ever-increasing specialization, it tackles the big questions of our day that do not fit into one department or one faculty but require important contributions from those units and beyond. It’s a way to create knowledge and to generate solutions.”

Connector Grants are meant for activities that are typically brief in duration (requiring clear timelines for the activities described) with highly targeted aims (scholars identify how the proposed activities lead to or intersect with broader, longer term transdisciplinary collaborations). Connector Grants may build on current programs but are intended to support work that goes beyond the current scope of those programs. Leverage of existing resources and contributions (financial or in-kind) is welcome but not required.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Connector Grants aim to support activities that help build new transdisciplinary connections. The proposed activities need to clearly show how they will result in lasting new connections as well as the benefit to the area of scholarship the activities are proposed for.

Transdisciplinary activities are recognised as team-driven initiatives with equal importance and responsibility of each proposed team member. The team applying for Connector Grants should consist of a minimum of two (2) scholars with diverse backgrounds. For administrative purposes one member of the team is to be identified as the project holder. An individual academic staff member may participate in multiple teams simultaneously. However, any individual academic staff member may be a Project Holder for at most one Transdisciplinary Connector Grant over a 24 month period, to support greater distribution of the grants across the academy.

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At the conclusion of the grant period teams must submit a report outlining the outcomes of the Connector Grant. Team members who are recipients of a prior (completed) Connector Grant must have submitted the outcomes report for that Grant before requesting a new Connector Grant. Team members who hold a current Connector Grant must include an update on the progress and describe any overlap with the proposed Connector Grant.

Connector Grants are offered in two streams – Initiating and Consolidating.

Initiating

Initiating Connector Grants fund activities that support the building of new, transdisciplinary connections. Activities may include, but are not limited to: (research) symposia, meetings, travel to meet new (external) collaborators, stipends for student support, etc.

Value of the Award: Up to \$10,000. Partner contributions from other sources (including departments, faculties, institutes, and/or external partners) are not required but are welcome if they meaningfully advance the new connections.

Duration of the Award: The default length of Initiating 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 duties.

The report on an Initiating Connector Grant should detail the new connections made and the ongoing (planned) interactions to further incorporate the transdisciplinary approach in their scholarship. Outcomes may, but are not required to, include (planned) external grant applications.

Consolidating

Consolidating Connector Grants offer the ability to build on and deepen, existing transdisciplinary activities and connections. This phase continues to support meeting expenses and stipends for staff and/or students to develop and engage in transdisciplinary research and scholarship. However, Consolidating Connector Grants are intended to support defined research and scholarship activities that advance collaborations, positioning them for potential downstream success in future scholarship and funding applications. In many cases, Consolidating Connector Grants will be a stage 2 application, submitted by teams who have received and completed the work of an Initiating Connector Grant. Teams can apply directly to the Consolidating Connector Grants stream, without first pursuing an Initiating Connector Grant.

Value of the Award: Up to \$20,000. Partner contributions from other sources (including departments, faculties, institutes, and/or external partners) are not required but are welcome if available.

Duration of the Award: The default length of Consolidating awards is twelve (12) months. If delays are experienced, no-cost extensions may be granted up to an additional six (6) months. Any unspent funds remaining after eighteen (18) months return automatically to the Office of the

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Vice President (Research). No other extension requests will be granted without formal documentation of an interruption to duties.

The report on a Consolidating Connector Grant should detail the ongoing (planned) interactions to further incorporate the transdisciplinary approach in their scholarship, how the funds have led to an increased and embedded transdisciplinary approach to the topic of the application, as well as a clear pathway to external grant applications.

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals holding UCalgary continuing academic appointments (tenured and tenure-track) are eligible. Individuals holding limited term, contingent term, or adjunct appointments are also eligible. Evidence of appointment terms may be requested.

DEADLINES

Applications for Connector Grants will be accepted on a quarterly basis.

Annual deadlines are:

Annual Deadlines	Start Dates
May 15	July 1
August 15	October 1
November 15	January 1
February 15	April 1

CONDITIONS

Connector Grant Awards are intended to establish transdisciplinary connections (Initiating) and to facilitate defining new, transdisciplinary approaches to topics (Consolidating).

Unspent funds will be recovered by the Office of the Vice-President (Research) after twelve (Initiating) or eighteen (Consolidating) months. Extensions requested on the basis of a formally documented leave where 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.

Teams awarded a Connector Grant must complete an Outcomes report at the end of the grant period. The report should include the following information in the template provided:

- Expenditures incurred.
- Outcomes of the Project, including the details described above, and next steps in the program of work.
- Any additional information on outputs and impacts associated with the funding (i.e., publications, presentations, funding applications, honors/recognition, trainees involved, partnerships established or strengthened, etc.)

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Applicants who have not submitted an Outcomes Report for completed projects will not be eligible for further Connector Grant funding until a report is submitted.

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 and activities include:

- Personnel costs, including research assistants, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, etc.
- Expenses related to targeted transdisciplinary workshops, symposia and network meetings, including:
 - o Event space rental
 - o Meals and refreshments
 - o Travel, meals, and accommodation
 - o Facilitators
- Materials and supplies

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:

Initiating:

1. The extent to which the proposed activity is being approached in a transdisciplinary manner.
2. The extent to which the proposed activity leads to new collaborations among UCalgary scholars and trainees, external scholars and trainees, external partners (community, non-profit, industry, international). Note – new collaborations can be in one or more of the categories listed.
3. The extent to which the proposed area of work is compelling, and how impactful a transdisciplinary approach to the topic will be (to the team's career trajectory, to the university, to society).
4. The extent to which a concrete body of work or activity is being proposed for Connector Funding, as a logical progression to an (increasingly) transdisciplinary approach to the topic involved.
5. The extent to which the team includes the appropriate expertise and representation for the proposed work or activity. Is the proposed work or activity a fit for the team, and the other work that they do.

6. The extent to which the team is presenting a winning, transdisciplinary context (i.e. presence of mentorship, strong collaborators, knowledge engagement partnerships that will help advance the program).

Consolidating:

1. The extent to which the proposed activity is being approached in a transdisciplinary manner.
2. The extent to which the proposed activity leads to deeper collaborations among UCalgary scholars and trainees, external scholars and trainees, external partners (community, non-profit, industry, international). Note – collaborations can be in one or more of the categories listed.
3. The extent to which the proposed area of work is compelling, and how impactful a transdisciplinary approach to the topic will be (pathway to future funding applications, to the team's career trajectory, to the university, to society).
4. The extent to which a concrete body of work or activity is being proposed for Connector Funding, as a logical progression to an (increasingly) transdisciplinary approach to the topic involved.
5. The extent to which the team includes the appropriate expertise and representation for the proposed work or activity. Is the proposed work or activity a fit for the team, and the other work that they do.
6. The extent to which the team is presenting a winning, transdisciplinary context (i.e., presence of mentorship, strong collaborators, knowledge engagement partnerships that will help advance the program).

The evaluation process for both streams will be undertaken in a formative manner. In cases where applications are not selected for funding, the Connector Grants secretariat will provide 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.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Applicants must clearly demonstrate their commitment to EDI in their teams, including among students, postdoctoral fellows, and other team members 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 as applicable.
- Training and development opportunities.
- 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.

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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.

APPLICATION ITEMS

1. Approvals page (this intake does not currently flow through RMS);
2. Completed application form for the Initiating or Consolidating Connector Grant as applicable.
3. Budget and budget justification including, if available, leveraged contributions;
4. Biosketches of the team members of up to two pages total length each, describing the profile and project role of each team member.

Please assemble your application items in the order as listed here. Application items must be typed single spaced, Arial font size 11 or equivalent. Biosketches 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.