



# The Eminence Program – 2023 Competition

Item	Date
Eminence Program Information Session	Friday, June 23, 2023, 11 am - 12 noon
<b>Notice of Intent Deadline</b>	<b>July 25, 2023 (4 pm)</b>
Notice of Intent Information Session	Thursday, July 27, 2023, 3 pm - 4 pm
<b>Full Application Deadline</b>	<b>September 11, 2023 (4 pm)</b>
Results Announced	Early November
Funding Start Date - renewals	November 1, 2023
Funding Start Date - new	April 1, 2024

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Fostering interdisciplinary research excellence and collaboration is a central priority in [UBC's strategic plans](#). The UBC Okanagan Vice-Principal Research and Innovation (VPRI) established the Eminence competition in 2017 to provide funding to support the formation and growth of interdisciplinary<sup>1</sup> research excellence clusters at UBC Okanagan. **Researchers from all disciplines are invited to apply.**

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.

The Eminence Program is an opportunity for UBC Okanagan faculty members to explore collaborations and methodologies that transcend traditional departmental or institutional boundaries to perform high-impact research in ways that a single discipline or single organization cannot accomplish on its own. Each cluster of research excellence is comprised of an interdisciplinary cohort of scholars who are leaders in their respective areas of expertise and who are working together on complex topics.

## PROGRAM DETAILS

Applicants may request funding ranging from \$20,000 to \$200,000 per year for a three-year term. Existing clusters are eligible to reapply for one additional three-year term. Funding for new clusters begins on April 1 and funding for renewed clusters will reflect the original award cycle.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this competition, “interdisciplinary” is used as an umbrella term to refer to “multidisciplinary,” “transdisciplinary,” and “interdisciplinary” inclusively.



To help applicants comprehend the core principles of the program and provide a guiding framework for cluster activities, **Eminence Program Values** have been developed. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how the proposed cluster will embody the Eminence Program Values in ways that are meaningful, relevant, and appropriate for the cluster. Refer to the Evaluation Criteria section for more information on how the values are applied to the evaluation of the proposals.

Eminence Program Value	Description
<b>Transcending Interdisciplinary Boundaries</b>	Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and/or trans-sectoral integration of information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, or theories in order to advance fundamental understanding or solve problems that are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice.
<b>Regionally Responsive</b>	Aligning with the strategic plans, research strengths, and/or priorities of the faculties and/or campus, and/or responsive to local (Okanagan) context and/or community.
<b>Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</b>	Recognizing, respecting, and valuing diverse knowledge, experiences, and contexts in both research design and research practice.

## ELIGIBILITY

**Individual faculty** can participate in a total of three clusters at any given time. Individual faculty can lead a maximum of one cluster.

**Clusters may have a maximum of two cluster leads.** In cases where two leads are named, a single administrative lead must be identified. 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.

**Clusters may consist of four to ten members, including cluster lead(s).** Cluster members may include faculty holding full-time academic appointments at UBC’s Okanagan campus, Point Grey campus, or other Canadian post-secondary institutions. Cluster members are permitted to hold sub-grants. Note that while proposals can involve faculty from other organizations, the primary aim of the Eminence Program is to support research on the UBC Okanagan campus.

**Clusters may identify up to 5 cluster collaborators.** Cluster collaborators are key contributors to the project who are not faculty members. They can be individuals or entities from industry, academia, government, the public, alumni, community groups, non-profits, donors, undergraduate students, graduate students, research staff, teaching and learning experts, student clubs, etc. Applicants will be asked to identify if relationships with the listed collaborators are established/confirmed, in progress, or aspirational.



## ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENSES

Expenses must comply with [UBC Business Expenses](#) rules and [TAGFA guidelines](#).

Eminence funds should be dedicated to exploring Eminence Program Values and advancing interdisciplinary research in ways that would not otherwise be possible through individual research grants. Successful applications may be recommended for partial funding.

### Eligible Expenses:

- Direct research costs (including consumables) that explicitly support the cluster's interdisciplinary research activities (annual maximum of \$25,000)
- Costs directly related to knowledge translation and exchange such as meetings, symposia, events, workshops, and/or conferences (annual maximum of \$15,000)
- Costs for a cluster administrator/coordinator
- Engagement costs, such as per diems or honoraria for community members or relevant groups
- Travel for cluster members and collaborators
- Training and professional development of cluster members, collaborators, and trainees
- Undergraduate, graduate student, and postdoctoral stipends and/or top-ups
- 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 \$2,500 per Cluster)

### Non-Eligible Expenses:

- Furniture
- Renovations
- Course releases

## SUBMISSION PROCESS

### Phase 1: Notice of Intent

Submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) form to [vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca](mailto:vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca) by **July 25, 2023, at 4:00 pm**. The NOI form includes:

- Names and affiliations of cluster leads, members, and collaborators
- Title of the cluster
- High-level research goals or questions (1-2 sentences) and research keywords (minimum of 3)
- Approval from the Dean or Associate Dean of Research for the cluster lead(s)

The NOI is non-competitive and used for information purposes. The VPRI Office may encourage teams to consolidate and teams are permitted to revise team members before the full application. Cluster leads, members, and collaborators are invited to attend an Information Session for NOI Teams **on July 27, 3 – 4 pm**, to learn more about the full application, EDI expectations, and evaluation criteria.

### Phase 2: Full Application

Submit a full application package to [vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca](mailto:vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca) by **September 11, 2023, at 4:00 pm**.



For new clusters, a complete application consists of the following items:

- Cover page including signatures (use template provided)
- Proposal (5.5 pages)
- Timeline (1 page)
- Budget justification (use the template provided)
- *Optional: a short-form CV for cluster leads and team members (2 pages maximum, each). The team's experience and expertise is otherwise described in the proposal itself.*

Clusters applying for renewal, a complete application consists of the above items plus:

- A copy of the cluster's Year 3 Finance Report to date (from funding start to ~ Aug 30)
- A copy of the cluster's Year 3 Progress Report

## PROPOSAL

**Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)** – In keeping with the principles of the DORA, plus recently adopted by SSHRC and NSERC, the use of article citation counts, Journal Impact Factors, and H-index should not be used as measures for research quality or researcher excellence. **Please do not include Journal Impact Factors, article citation counts or H-index in your application.**

**Demographic data** is not requested, nor required to assess impacts related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in research practice. If a team member's self-identification (gender, Indigenous identity, disability, or racial background) is relevant to the research project, that self-identifying information may be included, but only with their consent. Otherwise, demographic data should not be included in the application.

**Interdisciplinary audience** - The review panel will include experts from multiple disciplines which means applicants cannot rely on the committee being knowledgeable in the applicant's specialized area of research. The proposal should be written so that the proposed research and the importance of the objectives, questions, and issues can be understood by all members of the committee.

**Indigenous Research** - Indigenous engagement is not a requirement for funding. Clusters engaging in Indigenous research will be evaluated with [SSHRC's Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#). Notably, a core consideration is that Indigenous research must be designed and undertaken in co-created practice.

**New for 2023**, applicants are asked to address explicit points within each evaluation criteria instead of a free-form proposal. This is intended to provide greater transparency by aligning what is presented in the proposal with what is assessed (see Evaluation Process, Evaluation Criteria, Key Criteria).

### 1. Theme (**what** do you plan to do) – up to 750 words / 1.5 pages

- Describe the challenge, complex issue(s), and/or interdisciplinary research question(s) the cluster will address.
- Describe the activities that will form the basis for the cluster; you may provide an overview of relevant approaches, methodologies, and/or frameworks if relevant.



- Articulate the cluster’s goals or key questions, expected outputs, and outcomes.

**2. Rationale (why does this matter) – up to 500 words / 1 page**

- Describe the intended impact(s) and benefits (short and long-term) from the cluster activities.
- Explain for whom the proposed goals or questions, outputs, and/or outcomes are significant.
- Explain field-specific norms where relevant<sup>2</sup> to highlight the impact of the proposed activities to an interdisciplinary audience.

**3. Team Capability (who will do the work) – up to 750 words / 1.5 pages**

- Provide a brief overview of the team’s knowledge, experience, and expertise specific to their contribution to the cluster, including the contributions and expertise of collaborators where relevant.
  - For relationships that were listed as ‘in progress’, or ‘aspirational’ in the collaborator section, explain any relevant relationship-building activities, and/or how you anticipate they will contribute to the project.
- Explain the interdisciplinary nature of the team, addressing how it spans multiple disciplines at UBC that will enable the development of research approaches to solve challenges that transcend traditional boundaries.
- *Optional: Submit a short-form CV (2-pages maximum) for the leads and/or team members*

**4. Feasibility (how will you work together to meet your goals) – up to 750 words / 1.5 pages**

- Describe how the team will work together to achieve the cluster’s aims, including the role the PI(s) will play in leading cluster activities.
- Describe the research environment(s) of the team, including access to specialized facilities, partnerships, networks, tools, or equipment.
- Describe how trainees will be involved and benefit from the proposed activities.

**5. Timeline (when the activities will happen) – 1 page**

- Provide a high-level timeline to highlight key cluster activities and outputs over the three years of Eminence funding.

**6. Budget (cost of the activities) – use the template provided**

- Provide a budget to outline expenses over three years and justify what the Eminence funding will be used for.
- If future directions are anticipated after the 3-year Eminence cluster, describe mechanisms (e.g. internal support, funding opportunities) the team could explore to sustain the cluster’s activities.

*Proposals must be written using a minimum 11-point font, single line spacing, with standard 1” margins on an 8.5” x 11” page layout. References, figures, and tables are included in page limits.*

## EVALUATION PROCESS

Members of an interdisciplinary panel will review applications and provide a score out of five for each of the evaluation criteria. The panel will meet to review the preliminary rankings and provide final recommendations to

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<sup>2</sup> Field-specific norms may include a brief description of the dissemination platforms that have the most relevance, considerations when working with partners, the number of students or publications typical to the field, etc.



the Deans. The Deans will consider 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. The final funding decisions are made by the Provost and VPRI.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATING SCALE

Applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Theme (25%)
2. Rationale (20%)
3. Team Capability (25%)
4. Feasibility (20%)
5. Timeline & Budget (10%)

Renewal applications also receive a qualitative assessment of their activities and impact to date: exceeded expectations, met expectations, or, not as far as anticipated.

To receive a score of 5/5, the application must excel at addressing all aspects of the evaluation criteria and also demonstrate alignment with at least one Eminence Program Value.

Rating	Scale	Description
Outstanding	5	Exceeds requirements. The application excels in all relevant aspects of the criteria and fully integrates the Eminence Program Values.
Excellent	4	The application fully satisfies relevant aspects of the evaluation criteria.
Good	3	The application satisfies some relevant aspects of the evaluation criteria.
Fair	2	The application partially satisfies some aspects of the evaluation criteria.
Poor	1	The application fails to provide convincing information and does not meet the evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Criteria	Key Criteria
Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulates a well-defined, original, interdisciplinary theme. Proposed activities or questions are interdisciplinary in nature and address a complex challenge and need.</li> <li>• Techniques, methods, frameworks, and/or tools are clearly described, novel, and appropriate.</li> <li>• Goals and outcomes are clearly described.</li> </ul> <p><i>All teams must address the Program Value of “Transcending Interdisciplinary Boundaries” for this criterion</i></p>



Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially transformative impact on UBCO and/or society.</li> <li>• Clearly articulates for whom the cluster activities could be significant.</li> </ul>
Team Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The diverse and complementary expertise of participants (cluster leads, team members, and collaborators) is highly appropriate to successfully carry out the activities.</li> <li>• The interdisciplinary nature of the team will enable the development of research approaches to solve challenges across traditional boundaries.</li> </ul>
Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team members’ contributions will be coordinated and integrated. The principal investigator has exceptional capabilities to lead the cluster, having successfully managed similar projects in the past, or has clearly demonstrated the potential to do so.</li> <li>• The cluster has appropriate access to the required facilities, equipment, partnerships, networks, tools, and/or equipment.</li> <li>• The research environment is enriching for all team members, and where applicable, provides numerous opportunities and support for the next generation of researchers (trainees).</li> </ul> <p><i>Recommended Eminence Program Value to incorporate: Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (e.g. EDI in research practice, including team governance)</i></p>
Timeline & Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeline of relevant activities showing a connection to reasonable and achievable outcomes.</li> <li>• A reasonable and appropriate budget that prioritizes cluster-building activities. Expenses are justified and aligned with the planned activities.</li> <li>• Any plans to continue cluster activities after the funding period are reasonable and appropriate.</li> </ul>
Renewals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear evidence that the cluster has met its goals and expectations as described in the Year 3 Progress and Financial Reports.</li> <li>• Demonstration that cluster activities have resulted in sustainable activities and/or securing new external funding sources as reported in the Year 3 Progress Report.</li> </ul>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**RPIF:** An RPIF is not required at the time of submission as institutional signatures are captured on the Cover Page. Recipients of the award will be required to submit an RPIF with an ethics declaration to ORS for the grant to be established.

**Annual Disbursements of Funding:** Funding for years two and three is conditional upon receipt and approval of an annual report that demonstrates satisfactory progress towards activities, goals, milestones, and outcomes articulated in the proposal.



**Budget Changes:** Clusters should connect with the Internal Programs Manager 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.

**Financial Terms:** At the end of the annual term, Eminence-funded accounts must equate to less than 25% of the annual budget. 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 one-year no-cost extension may be granted at the discretion of the VPRI.

**Reporting:** Clusters will have a single administrative cluster lead (who may designate a delegate in case of extended absence). The administrative lead will be responsible for managing all aspects of the cluster, including financial oversight, and will provide a progress report and a financial report each year to [vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca](mailto:vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca). Details and templates will be provided with the award notice.

## PROGRAM CONTACT

Questions and comments regarding this program can be directed to Nicole Bennett, Internal Programs Manager, Office of the Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation, [nicole.bennett@ubc.ca](mailto:nicole.bennett@ubc.ca), 250.807.8408.