THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Okanagan Campus

Critical Research Equipment & Tools (CRET) Program

KEY DATES	
Application Deadline	January 23, 2024 @ 11:59 pm
Funding Start Date	March 15, 2024

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

Access to cutting-edge, high-quality research equipment and tools is essential for conducting world-class research that produces tangible impact. Through this annual funding program, the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation (VPRI) Office aims to improve the range and quality of UBC Okanagan's research infrastructure, keep pace with technology, and provide opportunities for student research training.

PROGRAM DETAILS

The VPRI Office established the Critical Research Equipment & Tools (CRET) Program in 2019 to provide funding to support the acquisition, development, repair, replacement, or creation of critical research infrastructure in all academic disciplines and research areas at UBC Okanagan.

Applicants may submit funding requests between $2,500 and $100,000. The 2023-2024 competition has a budget envelope of up to $400,000.

Application Stream	Total Funding Requested
Stream 1	$2,500 to $25,000
Stream 2	$25,001 to $100,000

The term "research equipment and tools" is inclusive of all infrastructure that supports research or knowledge creation activities in any discipline.

The CRET grant program embodies the SSHRC definition of research tools as "items that enable researchers to collect, organize, analyze, visualize, mobilize and store quantitative and qualitative data and creative outputs". Applications from scholars and researchers in all research or knowledge-creation fields are encouraged.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

- Successful applications will be driven by the need to support specific research activities and projects requiring critical equipment or tools that are not currently available on campus.
- The equipment must be housed in existing research spaces on campus (including research institutes and centers).
- Applications for equipment to be housed in one of the shared research facilities on campus (namely: In-vivo Animal Facility, Fipke Laboratory of Trace Element Research, Plant Growth

Facility, Research Data Centre, Survive and Thrive Applied Research) will normally not be eligible unless it fills a critical need specific to a particular research project that makes use of the facility.

- The identification of a research space in which to house CRET-funded equipment is a critical requirement of the application process. For proposals requiring new research space in which to house the requested CFI infrastructure, Faculty and Associate Dean of Research should confirm what space may be available within the current faculty research space envelope. The details about your research space should be known before submitting an application.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- Individual faculty can be listed on a maximum of 2 applications in any single year.
- The Principal Investigator (PI) cannot submit more than one application as the PI.
- PIs who received funding in last year's competition cannot re-apply as a PI in this year's competition.
- The PI must be a faculty member at UBC Okanagan with a full-time academic appointment in the tenured or tenure-track research stream.
- Co-applicants must be faculty members at a UBC Okanagan with a full-time academic appointment in the tenured or tenure-track research stream.
- Each application may have up to four co-applicants.
- The PI must hold active external research funding as a PI or co-PI at the time of application.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Use your CWL to log into the VPRI Research & Innovation Apply portal (apply.research.ubc.ca) and complete the following items:

1. **Cover Page –** Record the name and details of the PI and co-applicants; the title of the equipment or tool; the total funding requested; other sources of funding; and, the application stream.
2. **RPIF –** Complete an RPIF including ethics and institutional signatures; upload the form to the portal.
3. **Proposal** – Upload a free-form proposal that addresses the specific selection criteria for the application stream and adheres to the respective page limits.
4. **Short-form CV** - Upload a short-form CV for the PI and each co-applicant. The short-form CV should highlight research experience, funding, student training, and publications that are relevant to the proposal (2 pages, each).
5. **Quote -** Upload a minimum of one quote or other evidence to demonstrate the cost of the equipment or tool. For requests over $75,000 (exclusive of taxes, duties, customs, and freight charges), two or three quotes are required unless a sole source procurement justification can be provided.
6. **Appendix –** Use one extra page to provide additional images, tables, figures, pictures, or schematics as needed (optional).

Application Section		Stream 1 (Up to $25,000)	Stream 2 ($25,001 - $100,000)
Proposal	Suitability & Capability	2 pages	4 pages
	Urgency & Need		
	Research Impact		
	Affiliated Research Programs	n/a	
	Plan for Operations & Maintenance	n/a	
	Training, Usage & EDI Considerations	n/a	
Short-form CV(s)		2 pages, each	2 pages, each
Quote(s)		1 minimum	1 minimum 2-3 if > $75K
Appendix (optional)		1 page	1 page

Proposals and CVs must use standard formatting (0.5-inch margins, 11-point font, and single-spaced). References are included in the proposal page limit.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Each criterion is equally weighted.

STREAMS 1 & 2

1. Suitability & Capability of Proposed Equipment or Tool

The proposal clearly describes the capabilities of the equipment or tool, why it is essential for the research, and that there are no other more cost-effective ways of obtaining the results or meeting the goals of the project(s).

2. Urgency & Need

The proposal demonstrates how the equipment or tool will be a unique resource to the research community (similar equipment or tools in the vicinity are not available). The proposal describes the impact on the applicant's research and the pace of progress if there was a delay in the acquisition or upgrade of the equipment or tool.

3. Research Impact

The proposal clearly describes the potential for major advances in the discipline and/or impact on other audiences as a result of the equipment or tool (i.e., student training, research and innovation outputs, competitive external research funding, publications, community and/or industry engagement, etc.).

STREAM 2 ONLY

4. Affiliated Research Programs

The proposal describes the quality and significance of the research projects and program(s) affiliated with the equipment or tool.

5. Plan for Operations & Maintenance

The proposal provides evidence that the research equipment or tools can be adequately operated and maintained for a reasonable number of years, including, if applicable, details on other sources of funding (UBC unrestricted sources, user fees, external grants, donations, industry partnerships) to support the operations and maintenance needs (i.e., annual license fees, consumables, technical staff, etc.). For a complete list of eligible costs for the operation and maintenance of the equipment or tool, please refer to the CFI program terms. Where applicable, evidence that Health, Environment, and Safety considerations have been proactively addressed (e.g., hazardous materials storage cabinets, fume hood / BSC requirements, cleanable (non-fabric) surfaces, emergency washing facilities, ensuring local ventilation is laboratory type).

6. Training, Usage & EDI Considerations

The proposal provides an appropriate plan for training users of the equipment or tools as well as optimizing the use of the equipment as a shared resource (internal and, if appropriate, external). Concrete actions to appropriately consider equity, diversity, and inclusion in the training and usage plan are described. For example, equitable access, time-sharing, and accessibility of the equipment for co-applicants and other users should be described. Demographic data is not requested or required to assess any impacts resulting from the consideration of EDI in the research team and training environment.

For resources on EDI best practices, refer to the NSERC, CIHR, and SSHRC guides or email Denise Maines, Research Development and Equity Officer.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be adjudicated by a multidisciplinary review panel using the applicable selection criteria and rating scale. A score of 6.0 or above is required in all the criteria in order to be recommended for funding.

Rating Scale	Description
9.0-10.0	Outstanding
8.0-8.9	Very Strong
6.0-7.9	Strong
4.0-5.9	Moderate
0-3.9	Insufficient

The top-ranked proposals will be recommended for funding. If any budget envelope remains, proposals that are deemed fundable but are not among the top-ranked may be entered into a lottery. The use of a lottery system to determine the remaining allocations is at the discretion of the Chair of the review panel.

EXPENSES ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Costs:

- The purchase of new, used, or refurbished research equipment and tools
- Costs to replace, upgrade, repair, enhance, or otherwise improve existing research equipment and tools
- Shipping, transportation, and installation of research equipment and tools, including brokerage fees, excise taxes, and duties
- Extended warranties or service contracts for new or existing equipment and tools
- Initial training of the main operator(s)
- Software subscriptions and licenses
- Costs for the creation, design, or engineering of research equipment and tools to enable researchers to collect, organize, analyze, visualize, mobilize, and store quantitative and qualitative data and creative outputs
- Purchases made in the previous six months before the application deadline are eligible

Ineligible Costs:

- Renovation costs
- Consumables and other direct costs of research activities
- Operational costs
- Maintenance costs, with the exception of warranties and services contracts listed above
- Non-equipment items, except as described above
- Lease or rental costs
- Salaries and trainee stipends except for those directly involved in the creation, design, or engineering of the research equipment or tool
- General purpose (personal) computer equipment or software
- Office equipment and furniture
- Administrative costs
- Travel costs except for travel directly required in the creation of research equipment or tools or training of main operators in their use
- Equipment or tools primarily used for teaching and/or non-research use such as knowledge mobilization. When equipment is dual purpose (e.g., research and teaching use), costs must be pro-rated accordingly.

AWARD TERMS

Financial terms: All funds must be spent within one year or they will be returned to the funding source. With proper justification, a six-month extension to the end date may be requested by submitting a Grant Extension Form to vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca.

Partial funding: CRET grants are normally for the full cost of the recommended items. In rare cases, the review panel may recommend partial funding, but the amount recommended must be sufficient to allow for the purchase of a functional unit.

Equipment ownership & location: All CRET-funded research infrastructure is owned by UBC and must be located on UBC Okanagan property. If the PI leaves the University, CRET-funded research infrastructure will remain at UBC Okanagan. In these circumstances, a new PI will be identified, subject to VPRI approval.

Operations & maintenance costs: The PI is responsible for all operating, maintenance, and any other additional costs incurred over the useful life of the research infrastructure to ensure the effective and optimal use of CRET-funded infrastructure. The useful life of the research infrastructure is considered to be the period of time over which the infrastructure is expected to provide benefits and be usable for its intended purpose, factoring in normal repairs and maintenance.

QReserve: All CRET-funded equipment must be included in QReserve.

PROGRAM CONTACT

For any questions regarding this program, please contact:
Nicole Bennett, Internal Programs Manager, Office of the Vice-Principal, Research & Innovation
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