



Exeter – UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership

[Initiator Grant Guidelines for Applicants:](#)

[Background](#)

Exeter and UBC Okanagan (UBCO) have developed a growing number of collaborations advancing mutual interests in teaching, research, and public service through formal agreements and joint funding mechanisms dating back to 2017. The next phase of collaborative engagement will be focused on some of our shared strategic priorities. The partnership will operate under the banner of the [Exeter - UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership](#). Both Universities are home to world-leading academics taking interdisciplinary approaches to tackle the major challenges of our age; building resilience and looking for solutions to the challenges presented by climate, environmental, and social changes. The Exeter – UBCO Sustainability & Resilience Partnership aims to generate exceptional research and teaching; to connect our talented researchers, educators, and higher education professionals in efforts to solve problems particular to our regional contexts. The approach will recognize the excellent foundations and existing linkages shared between Exeter and UBCO faculty, and give fresh focus through 3 Key Thematic focus areas:

- 1. Adaption to Climate and Ecological Change:** Bringing together expertise from engineers, climate scientists, ecologists, environmental humanities, and policymakers to explore solutions to the climate crisis and build resilience in our communities.
- 2. Innovative Health Initiatives:** Encouraging interdisciplinary approaches that impact positively on human health & performance, focusing on the needs of our regional communities, building outstanding health education together, and catalyzing new research.
- 3. Enhancing Social Justice:** Combining the unique perspectives of Exeter and UBCO faculty / staff to lead progress to create a fairer, socially just, and inclusive society. We will seek to work in partnership with our local communities to structure our research, creative, and education initiatives together, delivering positive impact for the places where we are situated.

Through the **Initiator Grant** and **Catalyst Grant** opportunities we aim to support faculty in:

- Increasing the impact of their research or education activities domestically and internationally.
- The development of novel, interdisciplinary research and/or teaching and learning concepts to the point of implementation and submission of bid(s) for external funding.
- Developing initiatives to the point of achieving high impact / high influence publications or equivalent.

The 2026/27 **Initiator Grants** are now open for applications, with a closing date of **3rd June 2026**.



Objectives

Following on from previous rounds of partnership development funding, awards of Fellowships and Project grants, the Initiator Grants aim to support pilot projects to establish or broaden collaboration.

In summary, **the key aims of the Initiator Grants are:**

- To develop and expand relationships between Exeter and UBCO
- To support both research and education initiatives
- To enable grant holders to develop projects for Catalyst funding and/or competitive, larger scale external grant applications.

Funding Details

Applications up to a maximum CAD \$7,000 / GBP £4,000 are invited.

Funding will be provided to the nominated lead applicant who will be responsible for the budget and for all arrangements for any events, activities, and participation.

Awardees will have up to July 31, 2027, to utilize the funds for the project or initiative. Funds that are not utilized within the specified period will be returned to their source. All funded applications will be promoted via the websites of each University.

Eligibility Criteria

Initiator Grants will be available to the whole academic community at Exeter and UBCO. Eligible costs include:

- travel and subsistence (meals and accommodation)
- external speakers/facilitators
- meeting, venue and catering costs
- equipment (small purchases in line with project deliverables)

The following items are not eligible for funding under this scheme:

- academic salaries
- third-party travel costs
- publication costs
- student fees / tuition
- indirect costs, estates costs and overheads associated with internal research facilities.

Application Process

Applicants will need to complete the Initiator Grant application form in conjunction with their counterpart(s) at the partner institution. Both a lead applicant and co-applicant at the partner institution will need to be nominated for each application. Up to two co-applicants may also be identified. Funding will be divided between the two institutions in the currency of their home institution. The amount provided to each PI would follow the Sub-Totals outlined in Section 8 (cost).



Applicants should ensure that activities are planned and scheduled so that in the event of an award, activities can be undertaken soon after. We expect projects to be completed within the stated timeframes.

Identical copies of the application should be submitted to both institutions at the below email addresses by **3rd June 2026 (11:59pm, local time of lead applicant)**.

Exeter: GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk

UBCO: vprawards.ubco@ubc.ca

Applications will be jointly assessed by a panel of senior administrator and key academic leads for the partnership. Lead applicants will be notified within the specified timeframe (see Key Dates).

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed via a competitive selection process based on the following criteria:

- Strategic fit
- Quality of initiative / activity plan as outlined in the application with considerations for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Perceived value from the investment.
- Potential to expand upon existing or newly identified areas for collaboration.
- Contribution to advancing and sustaining the Exeter - UBCO partnership.

Feedback and Submissions

Feedback is not usually provided for Initiator Grant applications. Resubmission is by invitation only.

Key Dates

Date	Activity
2 April 2026	Calls for applications issued
3 June 2026	Application deadline
Late July 2026	Applicants notified of outcome
15 August 2026	Earliest project start date
31 July 2027	Project completion deadline (12 months)
31 August 2027	Post-project report submission deadline

Grant acquittal and reporting

Awardees must agree to adhere to all requirements related to the receipt of funding including deadlines and procedures for acquittal of funds and reporting on outcomes.



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



University
of Exeter

Awardees will have up to July 31, 2027, to utilize the funds for the project or initiative. Funds that are not utilized within the specified period will be withdrawn.

Within 1 month of the project completion date, awardees will be required to submit a brief report outlining the successes and outcomes of the project. Report forms will be provided to Project Leads.

This report will be utilized for the follow up of potential opportunities, reporting on outcomes and to highlight successes of the initiative between UBCO & Exeter.

Awardees who embark on international travel are required to abide by official reporting, insurance and registration requirements as outlined in:

UBCO policies: <https://finance.ubc.ca/expenditure-guidelines-0/travel-expenditures>

Exeter policies:

<https://universityofexeteruk.sharepoint.com/sites/Travel/SitePages/Booking-your-Travel.aspx>

Contacts

Please consult your home institution contacts if you would like any additional information.

Exeter: Stuart Westhead (Global Partnerships Regional Head – North America & Europe) S.westhead@exeter.ac.uk; Global Partnerships Team GP-Funding@exeter.ac.uk

UBCO: Pierre Rondier (Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Operations) pierre.rondier@ubc.ca; Nicole Bennett (Internal Programs Manager, VPRI Office) nicole.bennett@ubc.ca



Annex A

Assessment Criteria

This guidance has been drawn up to assist applicants when completing their Initiator Grant application forms. The purpose is to explain what type of information and evidence is required to satisfy the assessment criteria.

Assessment Criteria	Evidence Required
Strategic fit	Clear information on how the proposed project would enhance the development of one of the established themes and, if applicable, subthemes.
Quality of initiative/activity	<p>How well the application has been considered and planned, and the strength of its potential for taking forward a development or collaboration. Are the goals stretching but achievable? Using data to substantiate, the bid should identify the need for and value of the proposed project and how this fits with UoE and UBCO objectives. Include supporting details on how the project would be significantly enhanced by being undertaken through this initiative.</p> <p>Considerations for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concrete actions to address equity, diversity and inclusion at stage of the research process are described. ▪ Considerations for how the research environment can be made more accessible and inclusive to the research team/trainees, and how to provide equitable opportunities for all members of the team to engage with the work being conducted are presented.
Perceived value from the investment	<p>Is the proposal offering value for money? Is it communicating clear evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a unique opportunity that is in line with the initiative's purpose • mobilizing a new or already interested, but perhaps disparate, research group, or disciplines, to come together and collaborate for the purpose of step change quality research and teaching • project management capabilities of the proposers - reassurance that, if funded, the project will run on time, to budget and deliver against agreed aims, activities and outcomes • tangible and quantifiable outcomes and impact for the benefit of the institutions as well as the more immediate group • the potential to publish high quality papers, influence policy, and leverage external funding
Potential to expand upon existing or newly identified collaboration	Evidence of strength and potential of the relationship. How can the group and its work develop beyond the project? What mechanisms will be used to ensure ongoing communications and interaction? Clear sense of potential trajectory for the project and the relationship.