The University of Cincinnati Office of Research
Internal Pilot Funding Program

Program Overview

Consistent with the Office of Research goals to spur interdisciplinary and collaborative research and to establish new partnerships within and beyond the institution, the OoR Internal Funding program is designed to seed promising, collaborative research endeavors to elevate teams' competitiveness for external funding. The expected outcomes for this program include:

1) Advance high-potential, team research and creative activities in emergent areas.
2) Empower interdisciplinary teams to drive breakthrough innovations and achieve prominence.
3) Increase teams' competitiveness and capacity for major extramural awards and funding.

Each award is $25,000 for a two-year project period. The program consists of four tracks in target areas.

- **Track 1: UC Collaborative Projects**
  - This track supports interdisciplinary teams pursuing innovative, high-impact projects. Seed funding is intended to foster new collaborations and advance emerging ideas that ultimately strengthen competitiveness for larger extramural funding opportunities.
  - For additional insight on Track 1 program expectations and past successful projects, view this informational video.
- **Track 2: Early Career Investigator Projects**
  - This track supports new interdisciplinary and convergent collaborations among early career (e.g. untenured) UC faculty, combining complementary expertise to pursue research directions beyond their individual programs. Proposals should show how they build a foundation for sustained collaboration and future external funding, rather than extend research supported by individual faculty start-up packages.
- **Track 3: Collaborative Projects between UC Faculty and Investigators at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center or the Cincinnati VA Medical Center**
  - This track supports new research collaborations between faculty from any discipline at UC and investigators at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center or the Cincinnati VA Medical Center. One PI should be from UC and at least one co-PI should be from CCHMC or the VA. Existing collaborators may apply to pursue substantially new research directions distinct from previously funded or ongoing work. Projects should position the team for competitive future collaborative external funding applications.
- **Track 4: International Collaborative Projects**
  - This track supports collaborative research projects between UC faculty and international research partners. Seed funding is intended to foster new collaborations and advance emerging ideas that ultimately strengthen competitiveness for larger extramural funding opportunities.
  - For additional insight on Track 4 program expectations and past successful projects, view this informational video.
  - Supplemental funding is available for research trainee travel through the Mobility for Success and Acceleration of International Collaborations program. Additional details can be found on the Office of Research Internal Funding website.

This program will follow a two-stage application/evaluation process. The first stage involves submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI). A subset of applicants will then be invited to submit a full proposal and share a 15-minute presentation/Q&A to discuss their proposed activities.

Key Dates

- **FOA Release:** November 19, 2026
- **LOI Due:** January 21, 2027, by 5:00 pm ET
- **Finalist Notification:** Week of February 8, 2027 *(anticipated)*
- **Finalist Proposal Deadline:** February 25, 2027, by 5:00 pm ET (finalists only)
- **Finalist Presentations:** Week of March 22, 2027 *(anticipated)*
- **Grantees Announced:** Week of April 19, 2027 *(anticipated)*
- **Grant Project Start Date:** June 1, 2027

Eligibility

- The PI must be a UC faculty member with at least an 80% FTE appointment.
- Faculty holding a primary appointment in one of UC's affiliates (CCHMC or VA) are eligible to contribute effort to a team but may not be the primary applicant.
- External collaborators are eligible to contribute in kind effort to a team but may not be the primary applicant, and no subawards or funding may be passed to the external collaborator's entity.
- Faculty may only submit one application as a PI per cycle. There are no limits to the numbers of applicants per unit or college. An applicant may be a collaborator on multiple applications per track. Applicants may apply to multiple Office of Research funding programs in an annual cycle, but proposed activities in each proposal must be distinct and not overlapping.
- Eligible faculty with external funding may apply, but the proposed activities must not duplicate those already funded at the time of award.
- Each project must consist of a team of investigators. At least one co-investigator must be outside the PI's UC department.
- **For Track 1 Only**: If the PI has a tenure track appointment, they must hold tenure at the time of application. For non-tenure track faculty, the PI cannot be in the first seven years of their initial academic appointment at the time of application.
- **For Track 2 Only**: If the PI has a tenure track appointment, they cannot hold tenure at the time of application. For non-tenure track faculty, the PI must be within the first seven years of their initial academic appointment at the time of application.

Letter of Intent Submission Requirements

LOIs will be submitted online via *Wizehive*, a user-friendly, internal funding software. The link to apply is unique to each track

- Track 1- UC Collaborative Projects Application Portal
- Track 2- Early Career Investigator Projects Application Portal
- Track 3- Collaborative Projects between UC Faculty and investigators at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center or the Cincinnati VA Medical Center Application Portal
- Track 4- International Collaborative Projects Application Portal

Letter of Intent Materials

Pilot applicants for all tracks should follow the instructions below. All applicants will be required to provide their name, UC email, UC ID-number, ORCID, college, department/unit, date of hire/appointment at UC, and proposal title within the Wizehive portal prior to uploading the required PDF file. In addition, applicants will provide the names, titles, and organizations of collaborators.

The LOI should be written for a general university audience in terms readily understood by those who are not experts in the field. Avoid jargon, acronyms, or other technical terminology.

The LOI should contain the following information in the order listed below and will be submitted as a single PDF file. Figures may be included but cannot be used to exceed the page limit. No hyperlinks or redirects to external information may be included. The LOI must adhere to general requirements of 12 point font, 1 inch margins, and single column layout.

1. **Research Interest and Impact (2 pages maximum)**
    - Title of Research Project
    - Track Selected
    - Name, Title, College, and Department of primary applicant
    - Names, Titles, College, & Department of any internal/affiliate collaborators
    - Names, Titles, and Organization names of any external collaborators
    - Problem Statement: *What problem do you want to solve & why?*
    - Approach: *How are you going to solve this problem?*
    - Impact: *What is the anticipated outcome, and who will ultimately be positively impacted?*
    - **Track 4 only** – (200 word max) *What is the rationale and necessity for including this international partner, and how will the international partner advance research at UC?*
2. **Bibliography/References Cited**
3. **Biographical sketch** of each team member (see template here). You may use the provided template or any federal template.
4. **List the PI's prior funding obtained from the Office of Research**, and the major research products resulting from that funding.
5. **Track 4 only - International Collaboration Research Security Review**
    - Request for Review: The UC Principal Investigator (PI) must complete the International Collaboration Request for Assistance Form, select "Proposal_Review," and provide a brief description of the proposed research, the international collaborator's institutional affiliation, address, telephone number, and, if available, a designated contact in the "proposed collaboration" field.
    - Institutional Review: The Research Security and Restricted Research teams will screen the proposed collaboration for potential compliance concerns. They will share their findings with the PI. Completion of this review is not required before the application deadline. An Institutional Review identifying no compliance concerns does not guarantee funding.
    - Documentation Requirement: After submitting the review request, the PI must upload a PDF copy to WizeHive as documentation that the review process has been initiated.

LOI: Review Criteria

- Project Merit
- Clarity, significance and relevance of problem being addressed
- Innovation and creativity of the proposed approach
- Feasibility of the proposed work being completed in the project funding period with the requested budget
- Suitability of the team to undertake and complete the proposed project
- Compliance with Application Guidelines in the RFP and the Submission Portal

Finalist Selection & Review Process

Each Pilot LOI will be reviewed by a team assembled by the Office of Research. Neither comments nor feedback on LOIs will be provided to applicants, however comments & feedback on full proposals will be made available to finalists.

Finalists will be selected based on the quality, novelty, team composition and impact of the proposed research, scholarship and creative activities, along with a clear potential to make further, sustainable contributions to knowledge and broadly impact society. Details on the full proposal process and required materials will be distributed to all finalists directly.

Award Conditions

- Budgets will be submitted during the finalist application round. All budgets are subject to Office of Research approval and must follow the Office of Research Internal Funding Budget Guidelines and University Financial Policies.
- Awardees are expected to attend occasional meetings, events, and presentations as well as provide reporting when requested by the Office of Research.
- Awardees who accept Office of Research internal funds to conduct research agree to serve as a reviewer for Office of Research funding competitions for two years following their acceptance of funds.

QUESTIONS? Contact research@uc.edu