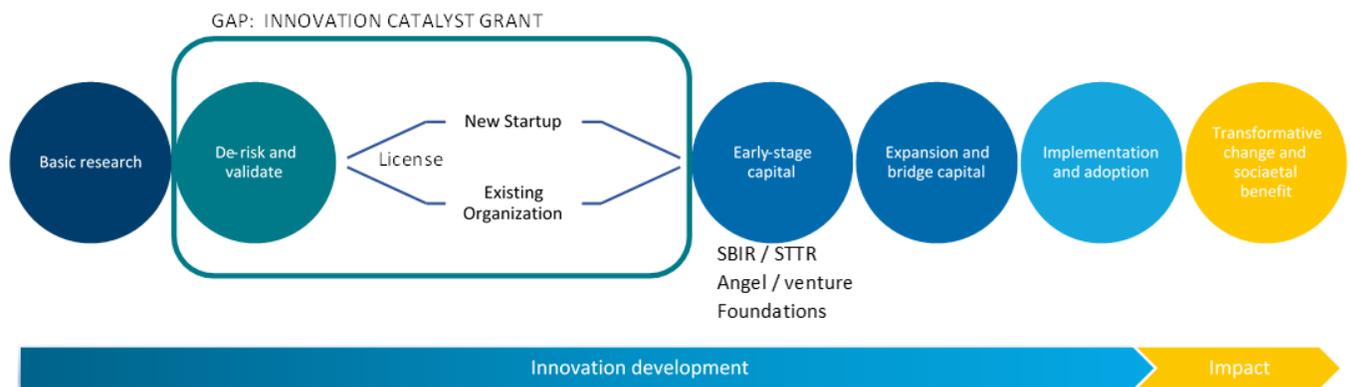


INNOVATION CATALYST GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Overview

The Innovation Catalyst Grant is a proof-of-concept program managed by the [Innovation & Business Engagement \(IBE\) Hub](#), focused on providing targeted gap funding, training, mentorship, and support to UC Santa Cruz (UCSC) researchers in order to help de-risk and/or validate the implementation and adoption potential of early-stage technology innovations. The overall objective of the program is to better position innovations to move out of the University (e.g., attract the interest of entrepreneurs, companies, and investors for licensing), and catalyze the process leading to transformative change and societal impact.

INNOVATION CAPITAL LANDSCAPE



The Innovation Catalyst Grant helps to fill the longstanding gap in the innovation capital landscape between basic research funding and early-stage investment, while also providing University researchers with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the pathway to innovation implementation and adoption.

Funding

Each Innovation Catalyst Grant will provide up to \$50,000 for direct costs incurred over a project period of up to 12 months. A total of up to \$100,000 will be available through the program in this annual cycle.

Eligibility

Any UCSC employee with Principal Investigator (PI) status is welcome to apply for the Innovation Catalyst Grant.

An Innovation Catalyst Grant project must focus on a potentially patentable innovation that:

1. has already advanced beyond the basic research stage;

2. is owned by the University of California (UC) without existing license obligations¹; and
3. now requires proof-of-concept support to demonstrate implementation, adoption, and commercial feasibility.

Projects supported by Innovation Catalyst Grants must be functionally distinct from other projects funded through federal, state, local, foreign, public or private foundations, non-profit organizations, industrial or other commercial organizations, or internal funds. For more information see the Proposals section below.

Key Dates

- Grant cycle opens: February 6, 2023
- Online program information session: February 10, 2023 (to receive a Zoom login, please [register here](#))
- Proposal submission deadline: March 24, 2023
- Anticipated notice of award: Late-June 2023
- Anticipated project period: up to 12 months (August 2023-July 2024)

Proposals

Innovation Catalyst Grants are intended to support the development of potentially patentable UCSC inventions, so applicants must file or have filed a [UCSC Invention Disclosure Form](#) for the relevant innovation prior to submitting their grant proposals. Intellectual property developed using Innovation Catalyst Grant funding will be assigned to UC and made available for license. For questions about the Invention Disclosure Form or patentable innovations, please contact Jeff Jackson, Director of Innovation Transfer (jeffjackson@ucsc.edu).

After filing a UCSC Invention Disclosure Form, applicants can submit a proposal for the Innovation Catalyst Grant through [InfoReady](#).

The proposal comprises the following sections:

- Innovation Description (limited to no more than 350 words):**
 - Introduce the innovation you seek to develop, describing the real world problem and market need it addresses, how it will solve the problem and address the market need, and the potential for transformative change and societal impact
 - Provide a summary of the progress made developing the innovation so far (e.g., successful results) and any challenges encountered
 - Discuss next steps and future plans if proof-of-concept is demonstrated through the Innovation Catalyst Grant
- Advancement and Adoption (limited to no more than 350 words):**
 - Describe what is required to de-risk and/or validate the innovation to advance development and licensing potential

¹ Projects developing UCSC innovations that have already been optioned or licensed to a company are not eligible to receive Innovation Catalyst Grant funding.

- Identify technical and/or commercial hurdles that must be overcome to facilitate implementation and adoption of the innovation
- Discuss the difficulties (if any) of overcoming these hurdles through conventional funding and resources

Project Plan (limited to no more than 1,500 words):

- Provide a statement of work detailing the key tasks, activities, and experiments proposed to achieve proof-of-concept results and address the challenges outlined in the preceding sections
- Funding should primarily be used to support activities that address the unique de-risking and validation needs of the innovation, such as the following, and may be used to support access to external resources and equipment and/or secure external technical services and contractors.
 - prototype fabrication
 - performance validation testing
 - software development
 - contract chemistry and analytical services
 - third party validation of results
 - small-scale animal model research
- While building on previous work, the proposed scope of work must be functionally distinct from other funded projects - it should not be dependent on funding from another source, and should not directly overlap with the scope of work of any project funded from another source.
- Project objectives must be achievable within a 12-month period following disbursement of the Innovation Catalyst Grant and using only awarded Grant funds

Budget Summary and Justification (limited to no more than 350 words):

- Provide a budget summary and justification detailing how requested Innovation Catalyst Grant funds would be used for eligible expenses aligned with activities detailed in the Project Plan²
- Funding can be used for up to \$50,000 of direct costs only and is not intended to be used for:
 - capital equipment purchases
 - maintenance agreements
 - market research reports
 - campus or project administrative or operational costs
 - conference attendance or travel
 - faculty summer salary
- No more than 20% of the total requested budget may be allocated to salary support including salary, fringe, and tuition and fees. This limit includes support for any graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, or other university researchers, and any academic year support for faculty - if salary support is requested, then clear justification must be provided to explain why such salary support is necessary for achieving the project

² Research that has already been performed or expenses that have already been incurred prior to Grant award are not eligible for funding.

objectives³ and, in addition to the budget summary, a detailed budget must be uploaded to the proposal (see Proposal Attachments below)

- If the proposal includes external technical services and contractors, then it should identify contemplated providers
- For questions regarding or assistance with the proposal budget, please contact Jeffrey Jue, Industry Agreements Officer (jjue@ucsc.edu)

Milestones and Outcomes (limited to no more than 500 words):

- Provide a schedule of key project milestones to be achieved sequentially using Innovation Catalyst Grant funding within a project period of no more than 12 months
- Explain how achieving each milestone would help de-risk and/or validate the implementation and adoption potential of the technology in order to make the innovation more attractive for licensing to an existing company or enabling the formation of a startup company within 1-2 years of project completion
- Provide a summary of your overall expected project outcomes, such as:
 - building a working prototype
 - generating data/results that enable patent claims or patentable improvements
 - demonstrating commercial feasibility and scale-up potential
 - producing results that support follow-on funding through sources such as the federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs

Proposal Attachments:

- Upload a detailed budget utilizing the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) [Detailed Budget Builder](#) template if your proposal budget includes any salary support for faculty, graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, or other university researchers. In addition to uploading the detailed budget, the proposal should still include a budget summary and justification section. For questions regarding or assistance with the detailed budget please contact Jeffrey Jue, Industry Agreements Officer (jjue@ucsc.edu).
- Upload a biosketch for the Principal Investigator using a standard format (e.g., NSF, NIH, or other)

Selection Process

Proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis by an external Selection Committee⁴ comprising industry R&D leaders and technology scouts, professional investors, technical consultants, and experienced entrepreneurs with subject matter expertise across relevant research disciplines. The Selection Committee will review proposals using a scoring rubric focused on program fit, innovation and technical merit, and proof-of-concept project milestones in order to make recommendations to the Vice Chancellor for Research, who will select the

³ Salary support is not intended to cover faculty summer salary. If the proposal includes funding for graduate students, then the PI responsible for supervising the education, training, or thesis-directed research or related activities of participating graduate student(s) must certify that participation of the student(s) in the program will not adversely impact the education, training, or thesis-directed activities of the student(s).

⁴ Selection Committee members will be obligated to protect the confidentiality of Innovation Catalyst Grant proposals, and will be expected to disqualify themselves in cases of conflict of interest.

Innovation Catalyst Grant awardees:

- **Program fit**
 - Does the proposal fit with program objectives?
 - Is the innovation at a stage where proof-of-concept funding will substantially enable next steps towards technology implementation, adoption, and commercialization?
 - Does the project address a gap in the development of an innovation with potential for transformative change and societal impact?
- **Innovation and technical merit**
 - How unique or novel is the innovation and does it have the potential to address a real world problem and market need and drive transformative change and societal impact?
 - Has the prior research conducted generated results that support proof-of-concept development and the activities that would be funded by the Innovation Catalyst Grant?
 - How clearly does the proposal describe the proposed activities and anticipated results?
- **Proof-of-concept project milestones**
 - Does the proposal indicate clear recognition of the steps, challenges, and value-generating milestones that would help de-risk and/or validate the implementation and adoption potential of the innovation?
 - Is there a reasonable likelihood of achieving project milestones, given the available financial and technical resources identified or anticipated, within the program timeline?
 - Would achieving the milestones make the innovation substantially more attractive for licensing to an existing company or enabling the formation of a startup company?

All submitted proposals will receive consolidated feedback from the review process to help guide future work on the innovation and inform proposals for proof-of-concept funding.

Program Benefits and Requirements for Selected Projects

In addition to notes and feedback from the review process, all awardees will be assigned an IBE Hub liaison as well as one or more project mentor(s) from the Selection Committee to offer direct insights and guidance to the team on advancing the innovation. Prior to receiving funding, awardees will be required to meet with their assigned mentor(s) to review the project plan and budget, make any minor agreed-upon adjustments within program parameters, and receive final approval. Spending of Innovation Catalyst Grant funding must be in accordance with the proposal budget, or a revised budget, approved by the IBE Hub.

During the project period, awardees will be expected to meet with their mentor(s) and IBE Hub liaison on a quarterly basis to provide updates on project progress and budget, and discuss the results of completed tasks, activities, and experiments. If an awardee, mentor(s), and IBE Hub liaison all agree that a project pivot is necessary to address identified de-risking and validation milestones, a revised project plan and budget may be submitted for approval by the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Innovation & Business Engagement.

Within the first half of the project period, all team members identified in an awarded proposal will be required to participate (as a team) in an NSF I-Corps lean launchpad immersive short

course, and meet all of the course expectations necessary to receive an instructor recommendation. This course provides valuable training for teams to identify pathways for adoption and find a scalable business model through the customer discovery process.

Awardees will also be required to submit a final report that will summarize the outcomes from project work as well as learnings from the lean launchpad customer discovery process. In addition, key members of the team will also be expected to provide a short presentation at an Innovation Catalyst Grant symposium organized in conjunction with a Selection Committee meeting for the following cycle.

Funded projects requiring regulatory compliance approvals (e.g., IACUC for animal use) must obtain such approvals within 12 weeks of award notification. Innovation Catalyst Grant funding will not be distributed until all requisite approvals are obtained, and failure to obtain such approvals within the allotted time may result in loss of funding.

Questions

Please contact the Innovation & Business Engagement Hub team (hub@ucsc.edu) with any questions about the Innovation Catalyst Grant program.