

UC President's Research Catalyst Award

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please Reference the 2016 Request For Proposals (RFP; final dated April 23, 2015) for Program Information

(This document is a supplement to the RFP; not a replacement for it)

The LOI due date is Thursday, June 4, 2015 at 12:00 noon Pacific Time

Full Proposals (invited only) are due August 26, 2015 at 12:00 noon Pacific Time

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How to Apply: LOIs (and invited full proposals) must be submitted online via [proposalCENTRAL](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/default.asp). On the proposalCentral home page [https://proposalcentral.altum.com/default.asp], log in to your account (or create one if you are a new user), click "create new proposal", and then select "University of California Research Initiatives – PRCA." Additional instructions are available online.

Eligibility and Proposal Submission: Eligibility guidelines are detailed on pp 2-3 of the RFP

Q1. *Can I submit a proposal for this funding opportunity?*

A1. With two exceptions, any academic appointee who holds PI status at one of the 10 UC campuses [Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Merced, Riverside, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, or Santa Cruz] is eligible to submit a proposal on behalf of the collaborative team. For guidelines on PI status, contact your UC campus Office of Research, or refer to Section 1-530 of the [UC Contracts and Grants Manual](#).

Exceptions: Academic personnel whose primary role is in university-wide, campus or school administration above the level of Dean are not eligible to serve as PIs, Co-PIs, or other grant Key Personnel. In addition, [recipients of the 2015 Catalyst Awards](#) are not eligible to apply.

Collaborators: Proposals must include collaborators from at least 2 UC campuses in addition to the host campus. In addition to the three campuses, collaborators from other systemwide research entities (eg: UC-managed national laboratories, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hastings, etc.) may also participate in the proposal. Each collaborating partner site must identify a Co-PI or site lead with PI status at their home institution.

Q2. *I am a Cooperative Extension Advisor with the Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. How can I participate in this collaborative research opportunity?*

A2. Cooperative Extension Advisors should collaborate with a Cooperative extension specialist based at Berkeley, Riverside or Davis campuses, or with other faculty on any of the 10 campuses, who can serve as the lead PI for the proposal.

Q3. *I am a scientist at one of the UC-managed national labs. Can I submit a Catalyst Award proposal?*

A3. Researchers with PI status at one of the UC-managed national labs who want to lead the project must have PI status at a UC campus and apply through that campus. UC national lab scientists and researchers who do not have PI status at a UC campus may participate as the collaborating PIs or Co-Investigators from their home institution, and must follow the requirements from their home institution regarding participation in the proposal.

Q4: *Do I have to get permission from my campus to submit a proposal?*

A4: The application process begins with a Letter of Intent submitted on [proposalCENTRAL](https://proposalcentral.altum.com/default.asp). Applicants may submit the LOI directly, and do not need approval from their campus C&G or SPO. Invitations to submit full proposals will be limited to no more than 30 LOIs or \$25 million in total funding requests. The full proposal must be submitted through the host campus Contracts & Grants (C&G) or Sponsored Projects Office (SPO). Proposal submission by the C&G/SPO denotes campus approval. Collaborators must ensure they have received permission to participate as required by their home campus.

Q5. *How many proposals can I submit?*

A5. You may submit only one LOI as the lead PI. In some cases, a collaborating PI may be invited to participate in more than one collaborative team. There is no explicit restriction on participating in more than one submission as a collaborator. Please keep in mind, however, that no more than 30 LOIs will be invited to submit full proposals. Individuals, or research teams, that participate in multiple proposals run the risk of communicating a lack of commitment to any particular endeavor or a lack of team cohesion in cases of overlapping topics. Therefore, we encourage you to focus your efforts on designing one strong collaborative proposal rather than multiple competing ones.

Q6. *Can we collaborate with non-UC research partner(s) on this project?*

A6. The intent of this funding opportunity is to catalyze UC multicampus and systemwide collaboration and to leverage the distributed excellence of the UC system. Systemwide collaboration includes participation by UC-affiliated research entities including the UC-managed national laboratories, DANR, Hastings School of Law, and others. Community partners from California may participate as part of the public/community engagement component of the proposed activities. Non-UC-affiliated research collaborators who provide services or expertise critical to the project success may be included in the proposed budget by exception only, when it can be demonstrated that their expertise or services are not available within the UC system. This request and justification is required as part of the full application for invited proposals.

Q7. *We missed the deadline to submit a Letter of Intent, can we still submit a full proposal without the LOI?*

A7. No. Unfortunately we are unable to accept Letters of Intent after the deadline, and only applicants who are invited to submit a proposal based on their LOI may proceed to the full proposal stage.

Q8. *My LOI was accepted, and our team received an invitation to submit a full proposal. Is the LOI binding or can we make changes?*

A8. The LOI must fairly present your proposed collaboration and activities, research topic, and approximate total budget. Updates, refinements and adjustments may be made to the proposed scope, personnel, and abstract when the full proposal is submitted. However, these should fall within the scope of the original LOI, and proposals that diverge significantly in scope or direction from the approved LOI are unlikely to receive priority for funding. The final proposal submission must include a detailed final budget request.

Proposal Scope, Activities and Requirements:

Q9. *The RFP says that there is no restriction on the budget size. How much money should I ask for?*

A9. Total available funding for this competition is \$7 million, and allowable award terms are 2 or 3 years. The competition is open to all scholarly disciplines, interdisciplinary fields and thematic topics. Given widely varying costs associated with different disciplines and possible projects, project budgets should be designed judiciously to ensure project success. Proposal budgets must be well justified in relation to the proposed activities and potential impact, and the appropriateness of the budget to achieve the proposed aims in the award period will be considered in the evaluation of the proposal merit. (see RFP pp 7-8)

Q10. *Are there any restrictions on the research activities we can propose?*

A10. Generally speaking, all disciplines and interdisciplinary research topics and projects are eligible for Catalyst funding. However, funds provided by this opportunity may not be used to cover patient care costs, clinical trials, patent execution costs, fundraising costs, undergraduate student financial aid, subawards to non-UC-affiliated entities (except as may be required to support community engagement or participation), or indirect costs. Please see the instructions on Allowable and Non-Allowable costs for detailed guidance.

Q11. *I already receive funding for a systemwide collaboration or multicampus project that is ending next year. Can I submit a renewal or extension request in this competition?*

A11. No. Catalyst funding is intended to support new endeavors, collaborations, or projects. While proposed activities may leverage existing infrastructure to pursue novel projects, if you or your team already receives systemwide funding for your collaboration, then the proposed Catalyst activities must clearly initiate new research directions, make distinct contributions, or undertake unique aims. All current and anticipated concurrent systemwide funding must be disclosed in the submission, and will be taken into consideration in the review and ranking process.

Q12. *Do we have to include all the components of the proposal that are outlined in the RFP?*

A12. Invitations to submit full proposals will be based on evaluation of the required Letters of Intent. The assessment of the LOI will include review of both the eligibility criteria and adherence to the program goals and funding priorities. *No more than 30 LOIs* (or \$25 million in total funding requests) will be invited to submit full proposals, so proposals that best fulfill the funding priorities will receive highest consideration. Please review the information on p.5 of the RFP for details on the LOI review and selection process. The review and scoring criteria for full (invited) proposals are detailed on pp 7-8 of the RFP.

Q13. *The RFP mentions faculty collaboration across career stages. Does that mean we have to have one PI at each level of the ladder-rank to be eligible?*

A13. No. Participation in this proposal is not limited to ladder-rank or Academic Senate-eligible appointments (see Eligibility Criteria on pp 2-3 of the RFP), and there is no required team composition for the proposal. The intent of the faculty collaboration requirement is to encourage faculty and researchers at all levels to collaborate, and to provide mentorship and leadership opportunities for early-career faculty in to the context of UC multicampus research in particular. The composition of the team itself is at the discretion of the collaborators and should be one that positions the project for success. The proposal should describe how the goal of meaningful faculty collaboration across career stages will be realized within the context of their proposed activities and research scope. Please review the RFP, and in particular Scoring Criteria #3 on pp 7-8 of the RFP, for further guidance.

Q14. *What is meant by public/community engagement in the proposal requirements, and what kinds of activities would fulfill this goal?*

A14. A key component of the Catalyst award opportunity is to catalyze public engagement in the UC research mission through opportunities for community collaborative research, citizen science, or other community outreach, education and engagement with the California public. Depending on the type of research, this component can take various forms, and the opportunities for public engagement and community benefit should be appropriate to the research scope and topic. The most effective and meaningful activities will be those that are well-integrated into, and strengthen the quality of, the research effort while also advancing the education and service missions of the University. We offer some possible examples of community participation and public engagement here for illustration purposes only, but remind applicants that this is neither an exhaustive nor prioritized list:

- Community collaborative or community participatory research in topics relevant to social, economic, health or cultural issues
- Involvement or participation of K-12 California schools or community groups in ecological data-gathering, urban gardens and nutrition programs, or the like
- Involving the California public in analysis of mass data sets that may reveal patterns or unique insights, or in gathering disbursed publicly-available data that would not otherwise be accessible
- Engaging communities in local problem-solving, urban or community planning, or after-school research-enhanced enrichment opportunities
- Education and outreach activities connecting the California public to museums, archives, observatories, or historical sites (etc.) with research relevance

- Activities aimed at engaging *new*, hard-to-reach, or underserved populations in research-related health education, cooperative extension, or other research-informed community benefit. (Funding must support new activities or communities relevant to the research, and not provide core support for existing programs or services.)

Note on Data Analysis and Integrity: If the public is involved in generating or analyzing research data, the full proposal should explain how the collaboration will ensure the integrity of the data and improve the quality of the research or strengthen the analysis, as appropriate.

Note on Human Participants: Please note that patient care does not constitute public engagement for the purposes of this opportunity, and clinical trials research may not be proposed. Human research subjects whose participation is primarily (or limited to) providing survey data, biological specimens, or other data for the purposes of the scientific analysis do not constitute community collaborators.

Note on Community Advisory Boards: Community advisory boards may enhance research engagement and community benefit, and therefore constitute a component of your proposed public engagement activities. However, the convening of these boards alone, without additional active public or community engagement in the research, or research-related education or outreach activities, is unlikely to provide sufficient evidence of meaningful community engagement for the purposes of this award. Please review the RFP, and in particular Scoring Criteria #5 on p 8 of the RFP, for further guidance.

Q15. *What kind of research opportunities are expected for undergraduates in these proposals?*

A15. The engagement of undergraduates in the research endeavor can take many forms, as appropriate to the project scope and activities. In some cases, this may include active participation in the research data collection itself, if appropriate and feasible to the project. In other cases, it may be through training or internship opportunities, or enhancements to undergraduate curriculum. It is at the discretion of the collaborative team to propose activities or components that will be both meaningful and likely successful within the context of the type of research proposed. Please review the RFP, and in particular Scoring Criteria #6 on p 8 of the RFP, for further guidance.

Please check our website for updates to this document and other program announcements.