VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH & GRADUATE STUDIES

Seed/Accelerator Program

Academic Year: **2011-2012**

Deadline: For application deadline please refer to Faculty call for proposals

Value: Up to $7,000 for Individual; up to $15,000 for Team

Duration: 1 year

Program Overview

The Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies (OVPRGS) Seed/Accelerator Program provides short-term support for research projects which have a high potential to build new partnerships and attract external funding for continuation of the research. This program supports two types of projects; Seed and Accelerator.

Seed funding supports the development of early stage and innovative research/creation projects by providing funding for the initial phase. A seed project is usually a short-term research project with the purpose of undertaking pilot studies, collecting and analyzing initial data, validating new methodologies or approaches, or developing new partnerships. The seed funds aim at supporting initial research activities that will lead to development of multi-annual research/creation projects with a high potential of securing external funding.

Accelerator funding supports projects which already have secured some external funding. By adding the resources from the accelerator funding to the existing funds, the project will be given a short-term boost and the opportunity to advance the initial stages of the research project. The accelerator funding is expected to result in development of new research projects such as strategic or partnership projects with a high potential of securing external funding.

Seed and Accelerator applications must target one or several funding programs provided by external sources (funding agencies, industry, etc) for the next phase of the project. In order to qualify as a seed or an accelerator project, it is important to demonstrate the potential to attract external funding within a time frame of 1-2 years.

The Seed and Accelerator funding program has two streams;
- Stream 1 – for individual researchers – funding up to $7,000;
- Stream 2 – for research teams – funding up to $15,000.

In order to allow applicants to optimize the impact of the Seed/Accelerator funding, competition dates for this program are adjusted to the annual cycles of the major external funding agencies' programs. The competition for individual researchers is launched in mid-April when the results from several of the

external agencies' fall competitions are announced. It is expected that the Seed funds will allow for a few months of research activities leading up to the following fall competition while the Accelerator funds will allow for additional funding in the initial phase of a project. It is estimated that 30-40 projects will be awarded Seed funding in 2011/2012.

Eligibility and Requirements

All full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty members are eligible to apply. Part-time faculty members who are actively involved in research may apply contingent on providing a support letter from the Department including information about end dates for time limited appointments.

Applications may be submitted by individuals or teams for research projects. For team projects, each faculty member can only apply once per competition, either as the lead applicant or as a team member. A faculty member can apply for the individual and team streams in the same year but for different projects. Matching funds can be included in the budget but are not required. An eligible team must include a minimum of two full-time faculty members from Concordia. For Seed projects, the applicant and all members of the team must clearly demonstrate that no external grants have been obtained for the proposed project (in whole or in part).

Eligible expenses are the direct costs of research, including:
- Salaries for students, Postdoctoral fellows and other personnel directly involved in the research;
- Travel cost for field work and data collection;
- Supplies and small pieces of equipment (such as software or computers).

Travel cost for dissemination of research results (conferences etc) are not expected to be included in the budget. It may be considered if pertinent and justified.

Research projects supported by the OVPRGS must comply with the University policies governing research.

Application Specifications

Each Faculty prepares a Call for Proposals inviting faculty members to submit applications to this program. In addition to the information below, each Faculty may require additional information as specified in the Call for Proposals.

Applications must contain the following information:

- Cover sheet (1 page) – fillable form available on
  http://vprgs.concordia.ca/planningandadministration/planningandinitiatives/)
- A lay summary (1/2 page)
- A detailed description of the project (max 3 pages), addressing:
  - objectives and expected outcomes
  - scope and brief background/context
  - fit with the program (identification if it is a Seed or Acceleration project)
  - activity plan with a timetable

- o training of students
- Targeted external funding opportunity (agency and program) and the deadline for applying
- Budget and budget justification
- List of all previously awarded grants to the applicant and team members under the OVPRGS program suite since 2006/07 (ARRE, Seed, and Facility Optimization) with a brief description of the status and outcome of these awards.
- Free format CV for the applicant (standard formats such as the Canadian Common CV or CVs by the major funding agencies are recommended). For team projects, the CV of the PI is mandatory; CVs for co-applicants' are optional.

Applicants are reminded that members of the Faculty Research Committees (FRC) and the University Research Committee (URC) must make their judgments on the basis of what is presented. As these committees might not include a member from an applicant's discipline, applicants are advised to avoid highly specialized technical language and/or disciplinary jargon, where possible.

Adjudication Procedures

Applications are evaluated and adjudicated by the respective FRC (or their equivalent), based on the following selection criteria:

- Originality and innovation of the proposal. For example, does the proposed project:
  - o Explore or test new ideas, methods or practices
  - o Have the potential for a breakthrough in knowledge or practice
  - o Explore new methods of transferring knowledge
  - o Foster interdisciplinary research, develop new research synergies, or networking opportunities
  - o Significance of the proposal in building or moving forward a research question or an active body of work
- Potential to attract external funding within two years
- Feasibility of the project, timetable, and sound justification of budget
- Training and involvement of students
- Outcomes and overall management of previous internal awards (ARRE, Seed, and Facility Optimization) held by the applicant(s)

In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined above, the Faculty may set specific evaluation criteria. The FRC will evaluate all projects and prepare a ranked list of the recommended projects. The ranked list is forwarded to the OVPRGS along with a description of the evaluation criteria, the adjudication process applied in the Faculty, and names of the FRC members.

The Faculty should prevent any conflict of interest between FRC members and the applicants. In case there is a conflict of interest it must be identified and disclosed.

The URC will make the final decision on funding allocations based on: (i) Faculty rankings, (ii) number of recommended projects, (iii) amount requested, and (iv) availability of funds. The University may declare preferences related to its developmental needs and strategic direction and choose to fund those projects that best fit with this description in any given year.

Competition Dates

- In the Call for Proposals, each Faculty indicates the internal deadline to submit complete applications.
- Faculty ranked recommendations must be received in the OVPRGS by the following dates:
  - February 24, 2012 (Stream 2 – Team)
  - May 11, 2012 (Stream 1 – Individual)

The awards are expected to be announced by April 1, 2012 for Stream 2 (Team) projects, and by June 15, 2012 for Stream I (Individual) projects.

Duration and Size of Awards

The Seed and Accelerator Funding Program grants are awarded to a maximum of $7,000 for individual projects (Stream 1) and $15,000 for team project (Stream 2). Matching funds are accepted but not required.

After the award announcement the awardees will be asked to submit a Grant Submission Form http://oor.concordia.ca to the Office of Research. The funds will be released upon receipt of the signed form and verification that compliance requirements (human ethics, etc) are met.

The awarded funds are normally spent within one year of the award notice. If the project is not completed within the time frame, the grant holder must contact the OOR. An award cannot be transferred to another faculty member, a research unit, or a Department. In general, only the proposed research project should be supported with the awarded funds, however, small modifications to the approved project are allowed. If a project is terminated before completion, the remaining funds will be returned to the Program envelope.

Recipients of the awards will be asked to submit a final report to the OOR upon completion of the project.