

Call for Applications

UCT Enabling Grant Seeker Excellence Awards

Application Deadline 2026

Thursday, 15 October 2026	For external-to-UCT funding applications submitted between 01 January 2026 and 30 September 2026
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Please address all queries to lezette.daniels@uct.ac.za

The Research Office announces the opening of the 2026 call for applications for the UCT Enabling Grant Seeker Excellence Awards. In the context of an unpredictable national research funding environment, the purpose of this intervention is to encourage applications to external - particularly international – funders as well as multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research collaborations by ensuring fractional funding based on grant submission, without waiting for the successful outcome, thereby providing seed funding on application enabling immediate progress.

The intention is to reopen the call each year (if funding is available), and researchers are therefore encouraged to seek research funding continuously from external-to-UCT sources by applying to grant funding agencies in South Africa and abroad, philanthropies, municipal and government departments, science councils, industry and other sources. Researchers are reminded of the [International Grants Hub](#) that provides both proposal development (grant writing support), and administrative support to academic staff seeking international research funding.

Eligibility Criteria

Applications for the Enabling Grant Seeker Excellence awards are encouraged from all researchers affiliated to UCT (permanent/contract/emeritus/honorary) and who will continue to be for the duration of the funding period. This includes joint Provincial Government of the Western Cape/UCT academic staff but excludes registrars.

At the time of application, applicants must have submitted an external-to-UCT grant as a principal investigator, or UCT-lead during the timeframe specified, and meet **ONE** of the following criteria:

1. It is the first external grant proposal application in your academic career.
2. It is the first international consortium grant proposal application in your academic career in which you serve as the UCT lead.
3. The grant proposal includes co-investigators from two or more faculties at UCT.
4. You are not currently holding an external-to-UCT grant.
5. You are currently holding one or more external-to-UCT grants (as principal investigator or UCT lead) with an annual income that does not exceed R600 000 for laboratory-based/fieldwork research, or R300 000 for desktop-based research i.e., minimal running costs, and are applying for an additional grant which may or may not be related to the one held. Limits specified exclude bursaries.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please complete the application form available [here](#).

AWARD VALUES

The awards will be sized according to the following sliding scales, which are linked to the amount the UCT principal investigator or lead UCT researcher will bring into the University should the external-to-UCT grant application be successful:

- R100 000 EGSE award for external-to-UCT grant applications of R5m or more
- R50 000 EGSE award for external-to-UCT grant applications of less than R5m but more than R1m
- R20 000 EGSE award for external-to-UCT grant applications of less than R1m and more than R100k
- R10 000 EGSE award for external-to-UCT grant applications of less than R100k and more than R50k

NOTE

While all eligible researchers are encouraged to apply, the amount available for awards each year is limited, typically to R2.4 million. Should demand be greater than the budget allocation, preference will be given in order of priority 1 – 5 of the eligibility criteria listed in the table above and/or to first time applicants.

In the application, the researcher will be asked to detail how the UCT Enabling Grant Seeking Excellence (EGSE) award will be used in relation to the work detailed in the external-to-UCT grant. This may include supporting the time of soft-funded staff to draft the applications. Researchers are cautioned to make considered and careful submissions to external agencies as inadequate proposals to funders risks reputational damage to themselves and may affect their own future success with such funders.

In all cases, only principal investigators or the single UCT *lead* researcher on a collaborative grant is eligible. Team members on collaborative grants are not eligible.

Due to the limited availability of funding researchers may only submit one EGSE application per annum.