

# STRATEGIC RESEARCH PRIORITIES PLAN (SRPP)

## FY 2026 Request for Applications



### VCU Quest Fund

**Purpose:** The goal of the VCU Quest Fund is to afford all faculty an internal funding opportunity to support new, emerging, or continuing research. Research proposals that advance any discipline and area of research focus are appropriate for consideration. Requests for grant support may be based on a broad array of needs, from restarting an inactive research program to pilot studies that would produce preliminary results on which external grant applications could be based. Proposed work that helps advance transdisciplinary research, multidisciplinary research, and cross-campus collaboration, as well as research that has the potential for translation to practice or market, is especially encouraged.

#### VCU Quest Fund At-A-Glance *(additional details below)*

<b>Proposal Deadline</b>	February 13, 2026
<b>Award Start Date and Project Period</b>	June 30, 2026 - June 29, 2028 (24 months)
<b>Award Ceiling</b>	Up to \$50,000 total, inclusive of required 25% school or college cost share
<b>Funds Release</b>	Funds are released at the time of award.
<b>Program Category</b>	Pilot/small project, funds for part of a larger project.
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Principal Investigator (PI) and Collaborating Investigators (Co-PIs) are encouraged to apply.</li> <li>• Additional PI and Co-PI eligibility factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PIs and Co-PIs must be full-time VCU faculty members. PIs and Co-PIs may be any <u>full-time, primary appointment</u> VCU faculty, research faculty or clinician researcher regardless of rank or tenure status, whose appointments are approved by the dean of their college or school. Clinician researchers must have a university faculty appointment to serve as a PI or Co-PI. Staff without affiliate college/school faculty appointments are <b>not eligible</b> to be a PI.</li> <li>• PIs and Co-PIs may be of any rank or tenure status.</li> <li>• PIs and Co-PIs with <u>active</u> VCU Quest awards at the time of proposal submission <b>are ineligible</b> to apply as a PI or Co-PI on an additional Quest proposal during this funding cycle.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transdisciplinary research, defined as research that combines two or more areas of study into a seamless project, required.</li> <li>• Inclusive research teams encompassing meaningful participation of all members are strongly encouraged.</li> <li>• Projects must <u>demonstrate alignment with</u>:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One or more of the initiatives identified in the <a href="#">VCU Strategic Research Priorities Plan</a>, with specific initiative goal(s) and objective(s) identified.</li> <li>• One of <a href="#">VCU's Research Impact Clusters</a>.</li> <li>• Federal and/or Commonwealth of Virginia research priorities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Faculty who receive a grant from the Quest Fund as either PI or Co-PI cannot serve as PI or Co-PI on future submissions to the Quest Fund until three years have elapsed from the end date of their most recent award.</li> </ul>
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**Full proposal deadline:** Application packages should be submitted via RAMS-SPOT Internal Opportunities here: [VCU Quest Grant \(OP0000858\)](#) no later than **5 p.m. (EST), Friday, February 13, 2026**. You will receive a confirmation email upon receipt. **Applications cannot be accepted after the deadline for any reason.**

**Format:** Applications must use [this template](#). Text must be single-spaced, Arial, 11-point (minimum) font. The template margins should not be altered. Proposals not following the format requirements will be returned without review. Once complete, **the template and any supporting documents must be converted to a single PDF file for upload.**

**Forms for submission:**

- [VCU Quest Application](#)
- [Biosketch Form](#)

**Budget guidelines:** All requested costs directly related to the project should be listed and justified in the budget section of the Quest Application Template. Facilities and administrative (F&A or indirect) costs are not allowed. **Budgets require approval from applicable chairs (or their designees) and deans before submission in RAMS-SPOT. Please consult with your department chair (or their designees) in advance and allow adequate time for approval routing.** See the Budgeting Guide below for additional information about eligible and ineligible costs.

### VCU Quest Grant Budgeting Guide

CATEGORY	ELIGIBLE COSTS	INELIGIBLE COSTS
Salary support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary support, <b><u>including fringe benefits</u></b>, for PI(s) and Co-PIs, <b>collectively not to exceed</b> 20% of total project budget (i.e., if the <u>total project budget</u> is \$50,000, the collective PI/Co-PI salaries and fringe cannot exceed \$10,000 total).</li> <li>• Salary support, including fringe benefits, for project staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary support for administrative personnel or 12-month UAP or executive personnel.</li> <li>• Salary support for external faculty.</li> </ul>

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Equipment and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research/project supplies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office equipment and supplies (including faculty computers, laptops, and tablets unless strictly related to project).</li> </ul>
Student costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hourly compensation for undergraduate, graduate/postdoctoral students and trainees, when justified and directly supporting project goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuition</li> </ul>
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential travel related to the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel not strictly related to the project.</li> </ul>
Other costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human research participant remuneration</li> <li>Facility fees should be shared</li> <li>Laboratory costs and supplies</li> <li>Consultant costs</li> <li>Publication fees</li> <li>Equipment/technology critical to the project. (Requests over \$5,000 must include a detailed justification.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional organization dues or membership fees.</li> <li>Sub-contracts to institutions or salary support for individuals external to VCU.</li> <li>Pre-award costs.</li> </ul>

**Review process:** The submission, review, and funding process are coordinated by the Office of Research and Innovation. There are three levels of review: 1) school and college-level review and ranking within recommendations, 2) review of level one recommendations by the associate deans for research (ADR) from each school and college, and 3) the final decision on ADR recommendations will be made by the Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI.) Review feedback is available for all applicants through the ADRs associated with cost share on the application. To obtain feedback regarding your application, please contact your [research dean](#).

**Note:** Multi-investigator proposals will undergo initial review in all units from which **cost share funds** are requested. The number of proposals recommended for funding is dependent upon available funds from each unit where cost share funds are requested.

While each school/college/relevant unit will establish its own review process, proposals are assessed in the following areas:

- Merit, including scholarly merit, impact on the field of study, and feasibility (budget and timeline)
- Broader impacts, including translational potential and potential for high return on investment.
- Responsiveness to (a) one or more Initiatives under the [VCU Strategic Research Priorities Plan initiative\(s\)](#), (b) one of [VCU's Research Impact Clusters](#), and (c) research must align with Federal and/or Commonwealth of Virginia research priorities. Research should demonstrate potential for a project to further the specific initiative goals and objectives identified.

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- PI(s) preparedness. Where applicable, team preparedness, transdisciplinary qualities, and diversity (meaningful participation of trainees, students and early-stage investigators as well as cross-campus collaboration).
- Additional school/college criteria as relevant.

**Award and reporting process:** The project start date is June 30, 2026 and the award period is 24 months. Funds will be released at the time of the award. A final project report including a summary of work completed, and progress on sustainability plans will be required 45 days after the project end date. The final report will be two parts, which will be submitted via RAMS-SPOT. These include an action in RAMS-SPOT and include a PDF attachment. Requests for final reports will be available within one month of project completion and will allow 45 days for submission.

### **Additional requirements for all VCU Quest Fund awards:**

- Projects are required to adhere to all VCU research-related policies, procedures, and compliance approvals, including intellectual property, IRB, IACUC, etc.
- All publications, presentations, etc., resulting from the project must acknowledge financial support from the VCU Quest Fund. Please provide DOIs or other standard identifiers in the final project report.
- Projects are expected to be completed within the specified budget period. Extension requests may be justifiable under limited circumstances following a request made to the Fund Manager at [OVPRIfunds@vcu.edu](mailto:OVPRIfunds@vcu.edu).

**Questions:** For specific questions about proposal budgets, cost-share commitments, school/college level review and endorsement signatures contact your [Associate Dean for Research](#). All other questions may be directed to [ovprifunds@vcu.edu](mailto:ovprifunds@vcu.edu).