

University of Glasgow Innovation Cluster Development Fund

Application Briefing Document

The Innovation Cluster Development Fund (ICDF) is open to all academic staff (including post-doctoral researchers and PhD students¹) at the University of Glasgow and prospective University spin-outs (where incorporated but have not yet undergone an investment raise).

Please note, Honorary and Affiliate staff are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

This early-stage fund enables staff and projects to focus on the development of innovative ideas that may have potential for a spin-out venture or worthy of exploration through other commercialisation routes.

ICDF will assist project leaders to validate and mature these innovations, identifying gaps that need to be filled in the journey to commercialisation and realising the potential of our new and groundbreaking discoveries.

The first round of funding is now open to applications with a **deadline of 12:00 (noon) on 16 January 2026**. All project budgets must be delivered in full by 31 July 2026.

What are the entry level criteria?

This call is open to staff members or PhD students at the University of Glasgow who have a project idea aligning with the eligible clusters, salary support in place until July 31, 2027, and a proposed projects meeting one or more of the following entry-level criteria:

1. Demonstrate a clear ambition to commercialise an idea or product offering/create spin-out venture – with a potential pathway to realise the following:
2. A customer led focus
3. Some evidence the solution meets an unmet need or market gap (however early) potential for competitive advantage
4. Potential for intellectual property protection (could be unpublished data/know-how or patent filing)
5. Alignment with one of the 5 eligible University of Glasgow clusters:
 - **Health & Life Sciences**
 - **Critical Tech** (e.g. quantum, semiconductor, photonics and wider digital enabling)
 - **Energy & Net Zero** (includes engineering)

¹ In the case of PhD students, to be eligible for Fund monies, a Principal Investigator (UofG employee) Budget Holder must be identified for the Project; and PhD students must assign any and all intellectual property rights arising from the Project to the University of Glasgow. Further, should students' fees or stipend be paid for by a third party, students may wish to obtain approval from that third party to participate.

- **Creative Arts**
- **Social Sciences & Social Innovation** (includes professional services)

What funding and support is available?

It is anticipated project awards will be in the **range of £25,000**. Larger proposals are welcomed but cannot exceed the **maximum Fund award of £50,000**.

Eligible costs

Examples of eligible work packages include:

- **Wide ranging support** e.g. market identification and validation studies/customer discovery exercises; prototype design; data collation; platform design; diagnostics; IP development; proof of concept; regulatory/compliance preparation, etc.
- **Buy-out of staff time** to generate evidence and validate the scale of the market for the innovation proposed via engagements with developers, investors, corporates, and other stakeholders. *(This could include engaging a product designer via sub-contract to input to creating visuals/narratives to pitch innovations).*

Note: Up to six months of salary costs for new temporary staff at University of Glasgow (direct appointments only) are eligible for inclusion, where it can be demonstrated that appropriate staff can be recruited in the timescale and/or that contractual arrangements for current staff on temporary contracts can be reasonably altered.

- **Developing a regulatory plan** to take an innovation forward.

Ineligible costs

The fund will not support the following costs for any applicant:

- Shortfalls from research funded by other grants
- PhD fees
- Publisher costs associated with Open Access
- Costs associated with academic conference attendance

How to apply?

- The deadline for applications for all calls is **12:00 (noon) on 16 January 2026**.
- **Late applications will not be considered.**
- All applications must include a completed and signed Application Form.
- If applicable, and for staff buy-out, please fill out the Small Grants Costing Template to assist with costings for UofG staff buy-out/appointments and attach this to your application. The Application Form and Costing Template can be downloaded here and must be returned in Microsoft Excel format.

- Application forms (in **Microsoft Word** format) must be submitted electronically to innovationandenterprise@glasgow.ac.uk

What are the assessment criteria?

All applications will be checked for eligibility, and thereafter eligible applications will be assessed by a small expert panel comprising commercialisation and economic development expertise from the University of Glasgow and its partners. The panel will assess and prioritise applications with respect to:

- Overall alignment with the purpose of the Fund.
- The stage of concept/prototype development and intellectual property status.
- Evidence of any industry endorsement for the project / solution.
- The market and impact opportunity.
- The potential for scalable spin out venture creation.

The project should have a duration of between 3 - 6 months. Projects are anticipated to have the Grant Award letter executed and can commence from **1 February 2026** onwards. **All project budgets must be delivered in full by 31 July 2025.**

Successful applicants will be notified of the outcome on or around **28 January 2026**.

See appendices below for other Terms and Conditions and our Privacy Notice.

What are the reporting requirements?

- Award recipients will be required to submit a short interim report detailing expenditure and projected outcomes by 31 March 2026. A reporting template will be sent out to successful applicants on confirmation of award funding.
- All awards must acknowledge their funding support in all publications, press releases and other communications materials as follows: Supported by the Innovation Clusters Development Fund (made possible by Shared Prosperity Fund and Scottish Funding Council).

Appendix 1: Other Terms and Conditions

- Principal Investigators must be the main budget holder for project funds at the University of Glasgow and are fully responsible for all project reporting and leading the delivery of project activities.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant(s) to ensure that all proposed activities are in accordance with the University's [ethical guidance](#) and [Code of Practice for Research](#). All projects must ensure appropriate [project risk assessment](#) have been completed before beginning any funded activity (including where activity is not being completed by UofG staff or students).
- Applicants must apply best practice in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion according to [University policies](#), please also refer to courses housed on the Equality and Diversity Unit's Moodle portal.
- The University of Glasgow is committed to take proactive measures to address the climate crisis, please consider [sustainability goals](#) when planning and performing project activities.
- All applications selected for funding are additionally subject to all other research assurance processes at the University of Glasgow, including due diligence checks, purchasing and procurement guidelines, and ethical approval.
- A privacy notice on how the University of Glasgow will process your personal data in relation to your application can be found at the end of this document.
- It is a requirement that the applicant(s) gains approval for any internal costs associated with their application prior to submitting their application and for project related time commitments from their line manager.
- Early Career Researchers would usually be defined as those who are currently on fixed-term contracts or who are within 5 years (excluding any career breaks) of their first lectureship appointment.
- No additional funds will be made available to projects that exceed their budget, including those associated with unforeseen VAT charges. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their requested budgets are sufficient for all project-related costs.
- Successful applicants should immediately begin preparing any necessary subcontracts, hiring processes and budget set-up – with support of the relevant College – upon notification of success (please DO NOT underestimate how long these processes might take). Do not start any subcontracted work (consultancy and similar) until all procurement and contract processed have been completed.
- Decisions on funding award are final and not subject to appeal.

Appendix 2: Privacy Notice

Your Personal Data

The University of Glasgow will be what's known as the 'Data Controller' of your personal data processed in relation to your application to the Innovation Clusters Development Fund. This privacy notice will explain how The University of Glasgow will process your personal data.

Why we need it

We are collecting your basic personal data such as name and contact e-mail address in order to evaluate your application, loading successful applications onto grant management systems, enable outcome tracking and to support emerging innovation initiatives across the university. We will only collect data that we need in order to provide and oversee this service to you.

Legal basis for processing your data

We must have a legal basis for processing all personal data. In this instance, the legal basis is 'Legitimate Interest'.

What we do with it and who we share it with

All the personal data you submit is processed by staff at the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom. We will use contact e-mail addresses provided in your application to provide information regarding the application and may also share general information (Principal Investigator name, contact e-mail address and general research interests) with other members of staff at the University of Glasgow, who might be useful contacts. Your application including name of Principal Investigator, will be shared with an expert panel of reviewers, some of whom might not be members of the University of Glasgow. We may share non-confidential projects descriptions, principal investigator names and e-mail addresses of successful applicants on University of Glasgow website and with the funders as part of reporting requirements (this may include sharing post codes with the funder to capture strategic regional outcomes for the Glasgow city region). Gender and ECR data is shared in aggregate form only and is used to identify and address any potential bias in the application and selection processes.

How long do we keep it for

Your data will be retained by the University indefinitely unless the information is deemed no longer needed. If the data is no longer required, it will be securely deleted.

What are your rights?

You can request access to the information we process about you at any time. If at any point you believe that the information we process relating to you is incorrect, you can request to see this information and may in some instances request to have it restricted, corrected, or erased. You may also have the right to object to the processing of data and the right to data portability. If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please submit your request to dp@gla.ac.uk.

Complaints

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter. Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotectionofficer@glasgow.ac.uk. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) <https://ico.org.uk/>.