

FAQ

How many Catalyst applications are funded?

In recent years, 10-15 Catalyst applications have been funded per review cycle, about 25 per year. Roughly 65% of Catalyst applications have been funded.

Are there any common reasons that Catalyst applications are not funded?

Here are some frequent problems:

- The narrative of the application was not written for a non-specialist.
- The project was not situated in the appropriate scholarly or artistic context (e.g., not including references). Yes, the R&D committee realizes that writing for a non-specialist yet being scholarly is challenging, but it is a challenge that successful applications meet.
- The application did not follow the recommended format in the proposal guide or contained large passages that were cut and pasted from sabbatical or external grant applications. Successful proposals are clearly written, well-organized, and written specifically for the Catalyst grant.
- The applicant did not appropriately document the commitment of external agencies or sponsors vital to the success of the project.
- The budget included items that were not essential for completing the project.
- The budget was not sufficiently detailed.
- The likely outcomes of the project were not sufficiently explained.
- The applicant did not demonstrate that they have expertise in the methods that they propose using.
- The applicant did not demonstrate they have the expertise (or action plan) to effectively analyze their data.

My scholarly/artistic record is not particularly strong, especially recently. Given that obtaining Catalyst Grants is competitive, is it worth my time to apply?

The Committee wants to catalyze scholarly and/or artistic activity for all faculty, and they are especially interested in doing so for faculty who have been less productive. However, such faculty should make a strong case that their preparation and circumstances will allow their proposal to succeed. For example, an applicant might detail retraining or other steps they have undertaken to ensure success.

If I recently received a Catalyst Grant or another one of the larger CSCE grants, will this make it less likely that my application will be successful this time?

During review cycles when resources are especially limited, an applicant who has recently (and/or frequently) obtained support might be less likely to be successful. Nevertheless, many faculty members succeed in obtaining grants on a regular basis. These individuals generally demonstrate a good return on the Committee's investment: they succeed in accomplishing the goals set forth in their grants.

I am a faculty member who often seeks and obtains external funding. Is it appropriate to seek a Catalyst Grant to help me continue my work when I am between external grants?

Yes, the Committee has funded many active scholars who are between grants. Successful applicants often explain how this funding will make their external grant application more competitive or will allow them to complete a project that was initiated with an external grant.

Can I seek funding to attend a conference?

If the primary purpose of attending the conference is data collection, interviewing participants, establishing a collaboration, or some other critical function that is part of the creative or research practice, then R&D views these travel costs as allowed. It will be the applicant's responsibility to explain how that attendance is integral to their scholarly process, and meeting with the Executive Director of the CSCE and/or the Chair of R&D prior to writing and submitting your grant is strongly encouraged. If the primary purpose is dissemination, the Dissemination Grant should be pursued instead.

Will including students in my project make it more likely to be funded?

The Committee recognizes and values that CSCE funding can lead to impactful student experiences as well as providing meaningful contributions to a project. However, the primary goal of CSCE funding is catalyze the scholarship and artistic activity of faculty. If a faculty member's primary goal for a project is to advance student development, they should consider other funding mechanisms, such as S3.

Is it appropriate to include student payment in my budget?

Yes, paying students can be a major (or even the sole) budget item. However, it is incumbent on the applicant to explain that employing students is the best or only way to complete their project. The case for paying students is generally strongest when students are working long hours, have unusual skills or training, or it would be otherwise difficult to recruit student volunteers to contribute to the project.

I will be applying for sabbatical. Is it appropriate to seek a Catalyst Grant to help me offset some of my costs associated with my sabbatical research?

Yes, the Committee has funded numerous faculty members who have applied for or who are currently on sabbatical leave. It is important to understand that just because you have received university support for your sabbatical leave does not guarantee Research and Development support for your Catalyst request. Make sure you follow the guidelines for the Catalyst proposal and do not just attach your sabbatical application.

What feedback will I receive if my application is not funded?

If your proposal is not funded, you may request feedback from the committee by sending the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence an email. You are also encouraged to seek additional feedback in a 1:1 meeting with the Executive Director of Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence and/or the Chair of R&D. They will offer suggestions on how to improve or strengthen your proposal for resubmission. Please contact the CSCE for more details.