

Catalyst Applications -

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).
- 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 was not sufficiently detailed or did not explain why budget items were vital to completing the project.
- 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.
- The application did not respond to all relevant sections of the application form.
- Other GVSU funding sources are more appropriate for the project.

What do you recommend if I want to make my grant application more competitive?

Seek feedback on your draft application, especially from peers and from people outside of your discipline or field. Some units have formal review committees for CSCE grants. In any case, more eyes on your proposal will help you tell a more compelling story about your scholarly/creative project.

Additionally, the CSCE's Research and Development committee has one or more members from each college and the library. Many of these committee members are willing to review draft applications, identify potential concerns, and recommend improvements.

What characterizes successful Catalyst applications?

- The proposal is written to allow a non-specialist reader to accurately summarize the project to a third party. Regardless of complexity, the strongest applications clearly explain what the project is, why it is significant, who is involved, and what everyone involved will be doing.
- The proposal clearly contextualizes the project and its significance. The strongest applications explain how a project relates and contributes to a broader scholarly/creative conversation in a discipline, a community of practice, and/or within the applicant's own scholarly/creative trajectory.
- A description of the how the budgeted expenses contribute to the project (e.g., if requesting funds for travel, explain why the travel is necessary to your project).
- The application has a compelling narrative. The strongest applications persuade readers that a project is interesting, important, innovative, or exciting, and they demonstrate that the project is feasible.

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. Successful applications of this sort typically describe how the grant will help develop a new creative/scholarly direction and demonstrate preparation or circumstances which will allow the project 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.

Note: catalyst and collaborative grants are designed as seed funding, not as ongoing support for longer-term projects. For new projects that are related to previously-funded work, strong applications explain how the grant will support a new research direction or catalyze scholarly/creative activity not covered by the previous grant

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.

What if I only need time to work, not money?

You can apply for the Faculty Course Reassignment for Research and Creative Expression, as a supplement to a Catalyst grant. If your project only requires time, you can apply for a \$0 Catalyst grant, select the Course Reassignment supplement, and focus your application on the reassigned time.

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. The most successful Catalyst grant applications emphasize the scholarly/creative nature and significance of the project, instead of student experiences

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. For example, a strong application to offset sabbatical travel costs would clearly explain how the travel contributes to the scholarly/creative project

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.

Faculty Course Reassignment Applications –

Why was the Faculty Course Reassignment for Research and Creative Expression Program started?

When prompted for the most significant factor that hinders faculty from completing scholarly activities, faculty feedback has consistently indicated that “time” would help them the most with their projects. Therefore, funds that would support the one course reassigned time will hopefully provide critical support in enhancing faculty scholarship. In addition, while more faculty are working under 12 month contracts, this Program should allow for the eligibility of almost all tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Do I need to submit a separate proposal for the Faculty Course Reassignment Program?

No. If you are submitting a Catalyst Grant for Research and Creativity, then you will just have to select the appropriate box on the application form, specify the semester or academic session for that reassignment, and provide justification on the supplied page.

Can I apply for only the Faculty Course Reassignment?

Yes. To do so, you should fill out a Catalyst Grant application requesting \$0, select the Course Reassignment box on the application form, and complete all relevant portions of the application form.

Do I need to report the reassigned time on the Faculty Activity Report?

Yes. The extra time for the proposed project is accountable by normal University standards.

Is the funding level a variable amount?

No. The department will be compensated with \$3000 for every awarded Faculty Course Reassignment.

If the unit head is not supportive of the Faculty Course Reassignment proposal, is it still possible to obtain?

No. The applicant's department is directly involved in the process, and therefore must be completely supportive.

With my normal appointment being a 9-month schedule, can I apply for a one course reassignment in the summer?

No. The course reassignment time must occur during the faculty member's normal appointment.

If my Faculty Course Reassignment proposal is denied, can I still be awarded a Catalyst Grant?

Possibly. If your proposal was recommended for funding due to its merit, but the course reassignment was denied due to lack of College support or if the R&D committee did not feel that you adequately justified your need for time, then you still could be awarded the Catalyst Grant.

Pre-tenure Supplement for Research and Creativity Applications –

Are there any time constraints in the funding guidelines that I should be aware of?

Yes, proposals are accepted from pre-tenured faculty members who are in their first four years of their tenure-track appointment at GVSU.

Can pre-tenure funding be used to supplement faculty salary?

No, funding cannot be used to supplement a faculty member's salary.

Are there limitations on the number of Pre-tenure supplemental awards I can receive?

Yes. You may receive the supplemental award only once. However, you can receive additional funding from the CSCE prior to your tenure and thereafter. For example, it is not uncommon for a faculty member to receive the pre-tenure and then a year or two later request and receive another catalyst grant.

Collaborative Initiative Applications –

How many Collaborative applications are funded?

In recent years, 0-3 Collaborative applications have been funded per review cycle, about 3 per year. Roughly 35% of Collaborative applications have been funded.

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

Here are some frequent problems:

- Applicants fail to demonstrate bona fide, original collaboration. For example, an applicant in the social sciences asking a lab scientist or statistician to perform a routine analysis would not be viewed favorably in terms of collaboration. If, however, the social scientist and statistician showed that they jointly developed and articulated the project and were using a non-routine method or approach, this would be viewed favorably. One indicator of bona fide, original collaboration would be that the two (or more) collaborators both authored the narrative of the application. Another indicator would be that the two (or more) collaborators both would be able to publish an article in their field based on the project.

- Applicants do not come from different disciplines and/or areas of expertise. It is possible for the two (or more) collaborators to come from the same department or units, but the application must make the case that the methods or approaches taken by the collaborators differ substantially and are not routinely used simultaneously in that discipline or area. Conversely, two applicants from nominally different disciplines that appear to be using highly similar methods or approaches might not be viewed favorably.

May I allocate funding in my Collaborative application for reassigned time?

Yes. You may budget for reassigned time. Please allocate the cost of \$3,000.00 for a 3-credit course. It is imperative that your letter of support from your Unit Head indicates their support for your reassigned time. It is important that you indicate which semester you plan on requesting your reassignment. Approval for the reassignment is dependent on support from your unit and your college. The extra time for the proposed project is accountable by normal University standards

Can I request summer stipend support on a Collaborative Initiative?

Yes. The Collaborative Initiative guidelines indicate that you are able to allocate up to \$5000 in stipend support. The request for stipend support must be well justified and match the time commitments of the research team. Stipend support can be split between collaborators based off of the level of effort described within the proposal.