

Building Global Research Alliances: U of T and the World

Many colleagues at U of T engage in productive and impactful international collaborations. Many of these take advantage of philanthropic, foundation, corporate, and government funding, both from Canada-based supporters and from international sources.

There may exist opportunities to unite existing partnerships, and develop new ones, with priority top global peers. Uniting these initiatives into Global Research Alliances (GRAs) can include these benefits:

- Align faculty, graduate student, and undergraduate student international mobility opportunities around key priority peer global partners, creating efficiencies in building and facilitating pathways with these priority partners;
- Increase awareness among U of T faculty, alumni, and funding agencies around U of T's engagement strategy with global peers, and gaining the benefit of reputational list from these high profile and high-esteem alliances;
- Using these alliances as a basis for recruitment of the best students from around the world, at all levels;
- Utilizing seed support, generating the early successes to fundraise sustained support through government, corporate, foundation, and philanthropic platforms.

A building block of GRAs: The International Doctoral Clusters (IDCs)

An IDC will be driven first and foremost by an academic rationale. In proposing an IDC, a team of co-Principal Investigators (PI)s, with support from the co-PIs' Divisions, will articulate an academic rationale and statement of commitment:

1. **Academic case.** The team will articulate area(s) of complementary research strength. The team will identify which strengths reside at each institution, and why it is imperative that these be united into a single research cluster. The team will discuss how these strengths result in an alliance that is more than the sum of its parts.
2. **Synergy and critical mass.** The team will list and explain the expertise and synergy among co-PIs (preferably 6-12 per institution). The team will discuss complementarity among the co-PIs, and indications that the co-PIs are indeed committed to transforming the IDC into an active, co-supervisory collaboration.
3. **Divisional contributions.** The team will describe cash and in-kind financial contributions that PIs, departments, institutes, and Faculty(ies) are committing to the IDC over its first 3 years. For example:
 - Institute, Department, Faculty contributions towards additional travel, accommodations, conference, and workshop fees that are critical to enabling this collaboration to succeed.
4. **Budget.** The co-PIs will build a budget to support the cluster. Typically it will be for a first 3-year period, with the possibility of renewal for an additional 2 years (for a total of 5 years of

seed funding) conditioned upon success based on a review led by the Office of the Vice-President, International (VPI). Typical total budgets may reach \$100k/year annually, with approximately 2/3 of the annual cash contributions coming from PIs, departments, institutions, and Divisions taken together; and the remaining 1/3 coming from VPI and SGS taken together.

5. **Implementation plan.** The case will include a description of the implementation plan for this IDC:
 - How will your Division and the Division at the collaborating institution raise awareness of, and participation, in the IDC?
 - How will you utilize the IDC to recruit new/highly qualified doctoral students into the program, benefiting each of the collaborating institutions?
 - What are the target numbers for the number of doctoral students participating in the IDC after 5 years?
6. **IDC model.** The PIs will summarize briefly the academic requirements that meet the existing PhD degree program requirements of the U of T and Partner Institution collaborators. This will lay the foundation for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that:
 - a. Establishes the conditions for a Joint Educational Placement for qualified doctoral students, including the duration of the students' residency at each institution.
 - b. Details the collaboration proposed that should be articulated within a MOU (sharing of labs, beamtime, exchanges for doctoral, masters and undergraduate students, co-teaching of graduate courses or short courses, field work, etc.)
7. **Path to sustainability.** The proposal will include key milestones at the 2, 3, 4, and 5 year anniversaries of the IDC, for the submission of grant proposals to national and international funding agencies, corporations, and philanthropic sources, and will show a step-by-path to building a sustained funded partnership that leverages the seed funding requested in the IDC proposal.

Review

Four annual competitions will be adjudicated:

- Proposals received by February 1, May 1, September 1, and December 1
- Proposals will, typically in 2-3 pages, address all 7 topics mentioned above under "A building block of GRAs: The International Doctoral Clusters (IDCs)"
- Proposals will be adjudicated by an interdisciplinary committee chaired by the Associate Vice-President, International Partnerships
- Decisions will be communicated within 6 weeks of submission