



2026 UNSW-IISc Accelerator Grant

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Purpose

The UNSW-Indian Institute of Science Accelerator Grant (*UNSW-IISc Accelerator Grant*) aims to support the development of early-stage projects that, either through establishing new research collaborations or strengthening existing ones, are innovative, sustainable and of strategic value to both participating institutions.

The scheme is designed to:

- **Build sustainable research partnerships** that extend beyond a single project and become long-term institutional collaborations.
- **Generate real-world impact**, with projects addressing shared societal, or global challenges rather than purely academic outcomes.
- **Support scalable research programs** that are well positioned to attract larger external funding from national or international funding agencies.

Applications for the scheme must be focussed in one of the following priority themes:

- Climate Resilience: Clean Energy Systems, Water Security and Sustainable Cities
- Critical Minerals, Advanced Materials and Circular Manufacturing
- Responsible AI, Quantum and Secure Digital Infrastructure
- Health and Biomedical Engineering

Activities that may be supported through the UNSW-IISc Accelerator Grant include:

- Joint research activities (e.g. workshops) to initiate, follow-up on, or work towards a larger collaborative project or training opportunity
- Setting up of new, international research networks to foster new links, promote the exchange of ideas and encourage best practice in a given priority theme
- The exchange of eligible staff/students to learn new techniques that are of broader strategic value to participating institutions
- Using UNSW funds specifically, the grant could support the development of small-scale research outputs (e.g. pilot data, prototypes) used to determine the feasibility of future, substantial research efforts
- Other collaborative activities aligned with the intention of the grant scheme

Eligibility

Each application must include a lead investigator from UNSW and one from IISc.

The lead investigator from **UNSW** must hold a continuing or fixed term academic appointment that extends beyond the end of grant period. Those with conjoint positions with UNSW may be considered. Those holding adjunct positions are ineligible to be project leads.

At **IISc**, the fund is open to all faculty members.

Project teams including early-career researchers (including higher degree research students) and/or an industry translation partner, are encouraged.

Funding and Duration

Projects are expected to commence on 01/01/2027 and are funded for a single calendar year.

A maximum of *AUD \$10,000 from UNSW* and *INR 5.0 Lakhs from IISc* is available for each successful project.

Funds can only be spent on activities that fit the purpose of this call. Applicants are asked to itemise and justify their budget in the application form. The award of any funds from either institution will be subject, in each case, to the internal processes and procedures of the respective institution.

Eligible Expenses

Please note cost eligibility differs between institutions.

Eligible expenditure items		Ineligible expenditure items
UNSW	• Travel* costs associated with UNSW investigators listed on the proposal • Reasonable living costs* associated with UNSW investigators listed on the proposal • Direct research costs associated with the project including but not limited to: - Workshop, or project meeting costs (e.g. venue hire, catering, and AV) - Consumables and materials - Payments to research participants	• Salaries (for professional or academic staff), including research assistants • Scholarship top-ups for research students • Conference registration fees • Teaching relief/buy-out • Entertainment • Indirect costs, estate/bench fees
IISc	• Travel costs associated with IISc investigators listed on the proposal • Reasonable living costs associated with IISc investigators listed on the proposal	• Salaries (for professional or academic staff), including research assistants • Consumables and materials • Indirect costs, estate/bench fees

** All travel activities must comply with the relevant policies and procedures of each respective university.*

Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the below criteria by both UNSW and IISc and the combined, top-ranked proposals will be funded.

Criteria	Weight
1. Strategic alignment and partnership potential	35%
• Alignment to UNSW and IISc institutional research priorities and impact focus areas • Strength and complementarity of the UNSW-IISc partnership • Potential to encourage broader institutional or multi-disciplinary engagement	
2. Pathway to scale and external funding	30%
• Contribution to building a sustainable collaboration beyond the project period • Identification of potential external funding opportunities including clarity of next steps • Where appropriate, the inclusion of researcher development (e.g. ECR/HDR involvement) that supports future collaboration and funding competitiveness	
3. Project design and feasibility	25%
• Alignment with UNSW-IISc Accelerator Grant priority themes • Quality and feasibility of proposed activities with clearly stated objectives • Realistic timeline and deliverables	
4. Budget and value for money	10%
• Justification of proposed budget • Alignment of expenditure with proposed activities and intended outcomes • Efficient use of funds to support partnership development and progression	

How to apply

Applications must be completed online using the Cognito application form.

This is a joint call. A single application should be submitted for each project that includes one lead investigator from each of UNSW and IISc.

Only one application is permitted per project team.

Key Dates

Applications Open	Applications Close	Applicants Notified of Outcome
29 September, 2026	2 November, 2026	Early December 2026
12:00pm AEST 7:30am IST	10:00pm AEST 5:30pm IST	

Reporting Obligations

Successful applicants will be asked to submit a final project report within 1 month of the project end date i.e. by 01 February, 2028.

Each lead investigator will receive an institution-specific report template from their respective university (UNSW or IISc) for completion.

Contacts

UNSW	Global Research & Impact Program (GRIP) team Email: grip@unsw.edu.au
IISc	Office of International Relations Email: iro.admin@iisc.ac.in ; cc: chair.oir@iisc.ac.in