

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACCELERATOR FUND

Applicant Guide 2024-25

About the Public Engagement Accelerator Fund

Memorial University's Public Engagement (PE) Accelerator Fund is designed to help meet the goals and objectives of Memorial's [Public Engagement Framework](#) by increasing the capacity of faculty, staff and students to collaborate with partners outside the University (*i.e.*, the public), and to help foster Memorial's special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The fund offers up to \$10,000 for projects up to 12 months (1 year) in length in support of the initiation or extension of public engagement projects that link to [Memorial's Mission](#).

The total amount available under the fund for this fiscal year is \$200,000¹; up to \$100,000 may be distributed in the first (fall) round and the remaining funds will be eligible to be distributed during the second (winter) round. Please refer to the [Office of Public Engagement's Funds Index Page](#) for fund opening and closing dates.

Applicant Eligibility

Proposals may be initiated by full-time faculty members, staff, or PhD students based at Memorial University. All proposals require a public co-applicant. A public co-applicant may be a representative of a group, business, organization or association from outside of Memorial University that has approval from the signing authority for the organization. The public co-applicant/principal external partner could also be an independent artist, scholar, community member, sole-proprietor, or corporate entity, provided the project demonstrates broader benefits beyond the individual applicants. A designate from another university, though eligible as collaborators, will not constitute the principal public partner for the purposes of the Accelerator Fund.

Proposed projects may be from any discipline and from any geographic area of the province, country or world.

Conditions and Terms

- Applicants must maintain full time status for three months after the end of the project.
- An applicant may only hold one open Public Engagement Accelerator grant at a time as principal applicant. However, applicants may serve as a principal applicant on one Accelerator project, while serving as a co-applicant on a separate Accelerator project at any given time.

¹ Subject to funding availability; OPE reserves the right to make changes to, or terminate this program at any time.

- Applicants may serve as principal applicant (or co-applicant) on a Quick Start Fund and/or Catalyst Conference Fund project, while also serving as principal (or co-applicant) on an Accelerator project simultaneously.
- Applicants who have been funded previously through any program of the Office of Public Engagement will not be funded again if they have outstanding, required reports from previous projects due.

Eligible Project Types

The Public Engagement Accelerator Fund supports the initiation or extension of PE projects that link with Memorial's academic mission involving teaching and learning, research, scholarship, creative activity, and public engagement. Proposals must be for projects that involve mutual contribution and mutual benefit with public partners and collaborators.

Some examples of projects that may be funded under the program are: development of Tri-Agency or other funding proposals for publicly-engaged research; feasibility studies; pre-research planning activities; post-research knowledge mobilization; collaborative creative projects; community-based/service learning projects; projects that involve public engagement contributions from alumni and other champions; and other activities that align with the Public Engagement Framework.

Priority themes or focus areas for the fund may be determined from time to time and will be communicated to applicants through the application guidelines.

The program **does not support:**

- Research activities involving human subjects and/or requiring ethics review
- Proposals for operational or long-term funding for existing projects

Required consultation with Grants Facilitation Officer

As noted above, the Accelerator Fund is not primarily a research fund; however, in some cases, it may be used to support research activities that do not involve human subjects and that are not subject to ethics review. According to the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research (2021), research is, "an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation."

All applicants must consult their unit's [Grants Facilitation Officer \(GFO\)](#) (where applicable) for unit review and to obtain the necessary unit approvals, prior to submitting your application to the OPE. If there is no GFO within your unit, please reach out to Research Initiatives and Services (ris@mun.ca) and they will assign a representative to review your application. Note that the Accelerator application currently does *not* go through Memorial's Researcher Portal.

Memorial's Policy on Research Impacting Indigenous Groups

If your application will impact Indigenous communities, peoples, or lands according to the [Research Impacting Indigenous Groups \(RIIG\) Policy](#), Agreement in Principle (Concept Development Phase)

may be required prior to submitting your application. Consult the [Indigenous Research Office](#) at Indigenousresearch@mun.ca if you have any questions about your specific project.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all relevant policies are met. Failure to do so may lead to significant project delays, inability to conduct the project as proposed, or to secure project funding.

Eligible Expenses

Expenses are considered eligible within the Accelerator Fund guidelines, provided that they meet the following conditions:

- All expenses must be directly related to the funded project and a clear justification of expenses categories must be made, with a breakdown of costs within each category, per the budget template within the fund application.
- Equipment purchases are limited to no more than 15% of the proposed Accelerator project budget. Applicants requesting funds for equipment should take care to articulate how the equipment is critical for the project and how it will be used to support sustained engagement once the project is complete.
- Memorial faculty or staff salaries, wages, and/or benefits are *not* eligible.
- Operational expenses of the public partner are eligible for up to 10% of the proposed Accelerator project budget. Memorial applicants are encouraged to include these costs in their proposed budgets.
- Public partners who are serving as the principal applicant may also be paid for their professional services, where applicable, and at an agreed upon rate as determined by the principal applicants/collaborators that form the partnership.
- Students may be hired to assist with projects and must be paid at the rate as set out by Memorial University under posted student hiring rates.
- Expenses must adhere to all relevant Memorial policies and procedures found online at <https://www.mun.ca/policy/browse/policies/>.
- Travel to academic conferences or academic conference registration fees are *not* eligible.

Application Process and Required Approvals

Proposals are submitted via the Office of Public Engagement's online platform, [Survey Apply](#) by the OPE deadline dates as posted. The platform will allow you to save your progress and return to your application as many times as needed. When ready for submission, please be sure to **complete the final step by hitting the Submit button**. Receipt of your application will be confirmed by the system auto-responder e-mail. If you have not received confirmation within one business day of the application submission, please contact us at engagement@mun.ca.

Required Approvals and Signatures

Two forms are located on the Survey Apply platform that must be completed and signed:

1. Faculty, Department, and/or Supervisor Approvals Form

A principal applicant from Memorial must be identified for all applications. All funds will be distributed to the Memorial principal applicant's department or unit. A dean, department head and/or director of the principal applicant must provide approvals via the approvals form, as well as an academic supervisor, in the case of PhD student applicants. The academic supervisor agrees to supervise the student-funded project, if awarded. This ensures support for the project, project oversight, and a willingness to administer funds (for funds disbursement, invoice processing, etc.).

Eligible Applicant	Required Approvals/Sign-Offs
Faculty member, postdoc or academic staff member	Department Head and Dean (or designate).
Administrative staff member	Administrative director or department head
PhD student	Academic supervisor, department head (or the director for Interdisciplinary PhD students only), and dean (or designate)

NOTE: Faculty and/or departmental approval deadlines may be earlier than those posted on the Office of Public Engagement's website. Please check with the Grants Facilitation Officer to confirm internal deadlines for required sign-offs.

2. External Public Partner Approvals Form

Applicants must obtain the approval of a representative of the principal external collaborator, who has authority to approve the organization's participation in the project.

Each form must be signed by the designated individuals and uploaded as part of the application completion (Electronic signatures are accepted).

Review Process

The review committee includes representatives from faculty, staff, and/or students, as well as public partner representative(s) who assess applications based on the established criteria noted below. Committee members who have a conflict of interest will be recused from reviewing the relevant application.

The review committee makes recommendations to the Associate Vice-President, Public Engagement and External Relations, who approves the distribution of funds.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be ranked by the selection committee based on the following criteria:

- **Genuine collaboration (Mutual Contributions/Mutual Benefits):** Proposed projects must demonstrate mutual contribution and mutual benefit for Memorial University and for public partners/collaborators. Questions to consider: is this project demonstrating evidence of contributions from collaborators? Are there noted benefits to all partners (or broader publics

where applicable)? Is there evidence of strong partnership goals (established through new partnerships, or deepening/extending existing ones)? (20%)

- **Alignment with Memorial's [Public Engagement Framework](#)** and the overall [vision and mission of the University](#); the application must demonstrate the project's alignment with, and responsiveness to, one (or more) objectives of the Public Engagement Framework, as well as alignment with Memorial's academic mission involving teaching and learning, research, creative activity and/or scholarship. (20%)
- **Feasibility:** Questions to consider: are the project's activities sufficiently robust? Can they be completed within the timeframe and resources indicated? Is there a clearly justified budget presented (with rationale for each anticipated expenditure)? (20%)
- **Innovation and responsiveness:** Questions to consider: Is this project a new idea, or one that builds on previous ideas/activities? Does it contribute to existing knowledge and relationships? How responsive is this project in meeting identified needs? (20%)
- **Dissemination of project activities/findings and potential impacts:** Questions to consider: is there a clear plan to disseminate findings from the project? What are potential impacts that may arise from the project/partnership? (20%)

We encourage applicants to demonstrate linkages with other Memorial frameworks wherever possible. Projects that involve students are also encouraged. Please see above under eligible expenses for student activities involving compensation.

Review and Selection

- All applications are reviewed for completeness and eligibility by OPE staff.
- The selection committee will individually review and rank eligible applications.
- Individual rankings are used to guide the discussion only. The top applications recommended for funding will be decided by the committee at the adjudication meeting.
- This is a competitive process and the OPE generally receives more applications than it is able to fund during each funding round. Projects that do not sufficiently align with the fund's goals and objectives will not be funded. Applicants who are not successful during the first round may be invited to resubmit their application during the next round.

Notification and Acceptance

Upon receiving a notification of award, recipients must return a signed acknowledgment form of the Terms of Award to the Office of Public Engagement indicating their decision to accept the award; acceptance of the award requires agreement with the noted terms and conditions (full terms listed below).

Fund Administration and Holdback Amount

A project account will be established in the department of the principal applicant (or an approved designated department) to administer funds, process project invoices, etc. Note that 30% of the total amount of the award will be withheld pending submission of required reports (mid-term report, final report and Yaffle project summary). Any unspent funds must be returned to OPE at the end of the

project.

Reporting and Communications

Awardees will be required to produce a short mid-project report no later than eight months from the start of the project, as well as a final report on their work at the end of the project period. Report templates are located on [Survey Apply](#) and must be completed there. Applicants will also be required to submit their project information to [Yaffle](#), Memorial's on-line connecting tool.

Terms of Award

If granted a Public Engagement Accelerator Fund award, the applicant agrees that they shall:

- Commence the project within two months of the date of notification of award.
- Enter the project information into Yaffle upon acceptance of fund and return of the signed terms.
- Complete mid-term and final reports via the Office of Public Engagement's (OPE) on-line reporting form, and a brief Yaffle summary at project completion per fund guidelines.
- Acknowledge the support of Memorial's Public Engagement Accelerator Fund in any and all communications related to the project (Public Engagement logo available upon request).
- Acknowledge that the OPE has the right to use all or portions of submitted materials on our website and through other communications channels.
- Use the funding provided for the purposes as proposed in the approved funding application and adhere to all Accelerator Fund, Office of Public Engagement, and/or Memorial University policies and procedures.
- Notify OPE in case of changes to the approved substance, budget, or timeline of the project, and accept that failure to complete the project as per original proposal may result in the termination of award funding.
- Return unspent funds to OPE after the project has been completed or terminated.
- Accept that project funds will be allocated in two installments. 70% percent of the funding will be released upon the receipt of a signed award terms form; the remaining 30% will be released on completion of project report deliverables.
- Complete the project, including all deliverables (Final Report and Yaffle Lay Summary) within one year from project award date, after which the 30% holdback amount will be released.

For questions about this program, please contact:

Penny Cofield

Coordinator, Office of Public Engagement

Email: engagement@mun.ca

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

The information on this form is collected under the authority of the Memorial University Act (RSNL 1990 Chapter M-7) and is needed for and will be used to assess your application to the Public Engagement Accelerator Fund. If you have any questions about the collection and use of this information, please contact engagement@mun.ca