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Office of Technology Development

HARVARD GRID

HARVARD GRID ACCELERATOR

OVERVIEW & APPLICATION PROCESS, 2025 FUNDING CYCLE
Deadline to Submit Pre-Proposals: December 9, 2024

OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Harvard Grid Accelerator is to accelerate projects towards one of the following outcomes:
  (1) formation of a financially self-sustaining start-up company,
  (2) licensing the technology to an established company, or
  (3) securing follow-on industrial funding for continued R&D.

While all developmental goals will be considered, strong consideration is given to **projects with high potential to launch a start-up company**. Such projects, while faculty-led, **will benefit from** having a postdoc or final-year PhD student who is interested in being a member of the founding startup team.

PROJECT TYPES

  ➢ The Grid Accelerator Awards are designed to support translational research aimed at extending preliminary results, establishing proof-of-concept, scaling-up a product or process, and generating (or enhancing) intellectual property positions.
  ➢ Optionally, a portion of the budgeted activities may be outsourced to one or more external organizations, such as a software programmer or an engineering testing facility.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

  ➢ Principal Investigators whose employer is Harvard University
  ➢ Proposals related to research in the applied sciences, physical sciences, computer sciences, or engineering

FUNDING

  ➢ Awards are up to $100,000 per project
  ➢ In certain circumstances, a higher amount will be considered, but not to exceed $200,000
  ➢ Funding will not be subject to Harvard indirect expense charges

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE AWARD

  ➢ The Principal Investigator will commit their time and effort, as appropriate, to lead and oversee the project.
  ➢ The project team will consist solely of the PI, Harvard postdocs and grad students.
  ➢ All intellectual property, including background patents, must be assigned to Harvard, and teams should acknowledge Harvard's intent to license any resulting and/or background IP.
  ➢ Budget items may not include PI salary or capital equipment. Certain other types of expenses are also excluded.
  ➢ Each awarded project team will submit quarterly written status reports and will participate in quarterly update meetings. The status reports will follow the template included in the award letter.
  ➢ A final report will be due within thirty (30) days of completion of the project.

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PROJECT DURATION

➢ Projects should last up to 12 months.

APPLICATION TIMING AND PROCESS

➢ 2-page pre-proposals with preliminary budgets are due on 12/9/24 by 5:00 PM EST.
➢ Pre-proposals will be reviewed, and a subset of applicants will be invited to submit full proposals.
➢ Full proposals with detailed budgets will be due on 2/10/25 by 5:00 PM EST. Applicants will be asked to present to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee, tasked with making recommendations for those projects to be funded, is comprised of Harvard faculty and venture capitalists with relevant backgrounds and expertise.
➢ The Advisory Committee meeting to review the projects will be held in March, 2025.
➢ Awardees will be announced soon after the Advisory Committee meeting.
➢ All submissions must be received no later than 5:00 PM EST on the respective due date, in Microsoft Word (.doc/.docx) or Adobe Reader (.pdf) format. Pre- and full proposals should be submitted by email to sam_liss@harvard.edu. The subject line should read "Grid Accelerator Proposal."

SELECTION CRITERIA

➢ The review criteria will consider:
  o Commercial potential of the proposed project;
  o Existence of (or possibility of filing) intellectual property owned by Harvard University;
  o Delineation of a clear R&D roadmap detailing how Accelerator funding will lead to a value-creation inflection point; and
  o Projects that could result in a financially self-sustaining start-up company.

IMPORTANT DATES

October 16, 2024	Initiate Request for Proposal process
December 9, 2024	Deadline to submit pre-proposals
January 13, 2025	Announce decisions / solicit full proposals
February 10, 2025	Deadline to submit full proposals
March 2025	Funded projects selected and notified

Please find, on the following pages, details of the required format for pre-proposals and full proposals.

FORMAT FOR PRE-PROPOSALS

Project pre-proposals should be no more than 2 pages long, excluding the summary page.

The emphasis should be on defining what the next value-creation inflection point is, and articulating how it will be achieved by way of a technical plan with well-defined milestones and a corresponding budget.

PAGE 1: PRE-PROPOPOSAL SUMMARY PAGE – SEE NEXT PAGE

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Project Summary

PI(s):

Project Title:

Budget Requested:

Period of Performance:

Project Summary (3 sentence maximum):

Summarize The Intended Commercial Product or Service:

Describe The Commercial Need and Impact:

Summarize How This Funding Will Advance The Project Towards Commercial Impact:

Describe The Commercial Path (eg: startup or license to existing company):

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PAGES 2–3: PROJECT PROPOSAL

Technical Background

➤ Briefly describe recent relevant research, including others in the field, and your own prior work, if any.
➤ What problem are you addressing, both technically and commercially, and what is its novelty?

Commercial Significance

➤ What do you envision as the commercial product?
  - What are the key advantages, relative to current products?
  - Provide high-level thoughts on the size of the market, such as number of people affected, target users, number of customers, market size, etc.
➤ What is the path to commercialize the product?
  - Launch of a startup? If so, can you state who from the research team might be involved?
  - License to an existing company? Who are the obvious candidates and why do you think they might be interested?

Project Plan

➤ Summarize the experiments you will perform to "de-risk" the project so that it will attract external investment.

Key Personnel and Collaborators

➤ List of individuals/organizations required to complete the project

Intellectual Property

➤ Summarize the IP related to this project: what IP already exists? What IP do you hope to develop through the performance of the project?

Budget (funding will not be subject to Harvard indirect expense charges)

➤ Total amount requested

APPENDIX (OPTIONAL)

Relevant publications / manuscripts

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FORMAT FOR FULL PROPOSALS

Full project proposals should be no more than 10 pages long, excluding the cover page.

The emphasis should be on defining what the next value-creation inflection point is, and articulating how it will be achieved by way of a technical plan with well-defined milestones and a corresponding budget.

SECTION 1: PROPOSAL SUMMARY PAGE – SEE NEXT PAGE

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Project Summary

PI(s):

Project Title:

Budget Requested:

Period of Performance:

Project Summary (3 sentence maximum):

Summarize The Intended Commercial Product or Service:

Describe The Commercial Need and Impact:

Summarize How This Funding Will Advance The Project Towards Commercial Impact:

Describe The Commercial Path (eg: startup or license to existing company):

SECTION 1: DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

I. **Project Plan and Objectives**
    A. Provide a brief introduction to the area of investigation
    B. Describe your specific research objectives and summarize the experiments you will perform to achieve each
    C. Estimate the cost and time required for completion of each objective
    D. Describe the anticipated results where possible
    E. Provide a work performance schedule or Gantt chart
    F. Propose a minimum of 3 key milestones or checkpoints for the project

II. **Related Research and Research Support**
    A. Describe significant recent research related to this proposal including your own work and others in the field.

SECTION 2: COMMERICAL SIGNIFICANCE

➢ What do you envision as the commercial product?
   o What are the key advantages, relative to current products?
   o Provide high-level thoughts on the size of the market, such as number of people affected, target users, number of customers, market size, etc.
➢ What is the path to commercialize the product?
   o Launch of a startup? If so, can you state who from the research team might be involved?
   o License to an existing company? Who are the obvious candidates and why do you think they might be interested?

SECTION 3: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Provide a brief description of:
   • Any inventions or other IP that you have already made that are related to the proposed project, and the underlying importance to the project of this or other Harvard IP
   • Any new IP that you believe will be created through the performance of the project

SECTION 4: DETAILED BUDGET

A. The project may be structured such that some, or even a large portion of the approved, budgeted activities will be outsourced to one or more approved entities (e.g., contract research laboratories/organizations, engineering/design firms).
B. The budget should not include expenses for PI salary, travel, or significant capital equipment (i.e. equipment should not be a significant portion of the budget).
C. The budget may include expenses for materials, CNS access, PhD student or postdoc salaries.
D. The funding is not subject to indirect expense charges.

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FORMAT FOR FULL PROPOSALS, continued

SECTION 5: KEY PERSONNEL & COLLABORATORS

A. Include any personnel at Harvard who will work on the project.
B. If you would like to work with an external mentor/advisor/expert, please let us know. Through our networks, we can locate an appropriate person who can assist the team as a technology or market (or other) expert. It would be expected that you meet with this individual regularly along with your BD team from OTD and the Executive Director of The Grid.

APPENDIX – MANUSCRIPTS/PUBLICATIONS

A. References to published manuscripts are sufficient – please do not attach multiple manuscripts to your submission.