



## OVERVIEW & APPLICATION PROCESS, 2026 FUNDING CYCLE

### Deadline to Submit Proposals: April 13, 2026

#### OBJECTIVES

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The goal of the Harvard Grid Accelerator is to accelerate projects towards the formation of a financially self-sustaining 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

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- 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 enhancing (or generating) 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

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

#### FUNDING

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- 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

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- Principal Investigator will commit their time and effort, as appropriate, to lead and oversee the project.
- Project team will consist solely of the PI, Harvard postdocs and grad students.
- All intellectual property, including existing patents and patents developed through the performance of the research, 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.
- 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.

#### PROJECT DURATION

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- Projects should last up to 12 months.




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## APPLICATION TIMING AND PROCESS

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- Proposals with detailed budgets will be due on April 13, 2026 by 5:00 PM EST. Finalists will be asked to present to the Grid Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee, tasked with making recommendations for those projects to be funded, is comprised of early-stage investors, entrepreneurs, and Harvard faculty with startup experience.
- The Advisory Committee meeting to review the projects will be held in June 2026.
- 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. Proposals should be submitted by email to [sydney\\_gladman@harvard.edu](mailto:sydney_gladman@harvard.edu). The subject line should read "Grid Accelerator Proposal."

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## SELECTION CRITERIA

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- The review criteria will consider:
    - Potential of the proposed project to realize commercial impact;
    - Existence of (or possibility of filing) intellectual property owned by Harvard University;
    - Delineation of a clear R&D roadmap detailing how Accelerator funding will achieve specific, measurable performance milestones which lead to a value-creation inflection point; and
    - Articulation of a clear pathway and team to create a financially self-sustaining start-up.
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## IMPORTANT DATES

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<b>March 16, 2026</b>	Initiate Request for Proposal process
<b>April 13, 2026</b>	Deadline to submit proposals
<b>May 29, 2026</b>	Finalists notified
<b>June 2026</b>	Advisory Committee meets to review presentations from finalists

*Please find, on the following pages, details of the required format for proposals.*



## PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals should be no more than 10 pages long, excluding the cover page. Please follow the specific section page limits noted below.

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

### **SECTION 1: PROPOSAL SUMMARY (MAX 1 PAGE)**

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- 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:

### **SECTION 2: DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION (MAX 2 PAGES)**

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- Project Plan and Objectives
  - Provide a brief introduction to the area of investigation
  - Describe your specific research objectives and summarize the experiments you will perform to achieve each; describe the anticipated results where possible
  - Estimate the cost and time required for completion of each objective
  - Provide a work performance schedule or Gantt chart
  - Propose a minimum of 3 key milestones or checkpoints for the project
- Related Research and Research Support
  - Describe significant recent research related to this proposal including your own work and others in the field.

### **SECTION 3: COMMERCIAL SIGNIFICANCE (MAX 2 PAGES)**

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- 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 are your high-level plans to launch a startup?
  - Who from the research team might be involved as a full-time co-founder?



#### **SECTION 4: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (MAX 1/2 PAGE)**

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- Provide a brief description of:
  - Any inventions or other Harvard owned 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 5: KEY PERSONNEL & COLLABORATORS (MAX 1/2 PAGE)**

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- Include any personnel at Harvard who will work on the project.
- 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.

#### **SECTION 6: DETAILED BUDGET (MAX 1/2 -1 PAGE)**

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- 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).
- 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).
- The budget may include expenses for materials, CNS access, PhD student or postdoc salaries.
- The funding is not subject to indirect expense charges.

#### **SECTION 7: APPENDIX - CITED WORKS (MAX 1-2 PAGE)**

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- Include citations for any relevant manuscripts or publications. Please do not attach full manuscripts.