

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Innovation through Translational Research: Catalyst for Emerging New Discoveries (iTRANSCEND)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Division of Research and Engagement through Innovate UNCG is pleased to partner with NC Innovation to invite proposals for the **Innovation through Translational Research: Catalyst for Emerging New Discoveries (iTRANSCEND)**, an internal funding opportunity designed to accelerate the development of innovative technologies and solutions emerging from UNCG. The purpose of this program is to support early-stage technology development, prototype creation, and proof-of-concept activities that can lead to new intellectual property, translational research outcomes, and competitive external funding opportunities. These seed grants are intended to move promising ideas beyond the conceptual stage by supporting the technical development needed to demonstrate feasibility, build prototypes, or validate new technologies.

Through this program, Innovate UNCG seeks to foster a culture of innovation and strengthen the university's capacity to translate research discoveries into technologies that address real-world challenges in areas such as health, advanced materials, data science, education technologies, and community solutions. In this funding cycle, the Division of Research and Engagement will support **five projects with awards of up to \$10,000 each**.

AWARD AT A GLANCE

Maximum Award	Up to \$10,000 per project
Project Period	8 months
Estimated Awards	5 awards
Funding Type	Internal funding
RFA Release	4/20/2026
Proposal Deadline	8/14/2026
Award Notification	09/30/2026
Project Start Date	10/01/2026

PROGRAM GOALS

iTRANSCEND is intended to catalyze projects that demonstrate strong potential for technology translation and broader societal impact. Specifically, the program seeks to:

- **Catalyze cross-disciplinary, product-oriented innovation** by supporting projects from the humanities, social sciences, and sciences that generate novel, market-ready products, platforms, or creative assets with clear pathways to revenue generation.
- **Advance translation of discovery into revenue-generating products** by enabling investigators to develop prototypes, validate use cases, and refine solutions that can be commercialized through licensing, startups, partnerships, or other income-generating models.

- **Strengthen commercialization and scalability pathways** by fostering collaborations and strategies that position products for market adoption, external investment, and sustainable revenue streams that deliver measurable economic and societal value. support projects that advance new technologies, develop functional prototypes, test proof-of-concept innovations, or generate critical technical data necessary to move discoveries toward application.

The program also aims to position faculty teams for future external funding opportunities from federal agencies, industry partners, foundations, or technology commercialization programs. By investing in promising innovations at an early stage, the program strengthens UNCG’s ability to transform research discoveries into technologies that benefit society and contribute to economic development.

ELIGIBILITY

Proposals may be submitted by full-time UNCG faculty, including tenured, tenure-track, and research faculty, and research staff. Individuals are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators on one proposal. Collaborative proposals are welcome and strongly encouraged, particularly those that bring together expertise from multiple disciplines or departments. Such collaborations can help generate new perspectives and create stronger pathways toward impactful research outcomes.

BUDGET

Each selected project may receive funding of up to \$10,000 to support research innovation activities. Projects may be conducted over a period of up to twelve months. The proposal deadline for this funding cycle is **August 14, 2026 at 5:00 PM**. These funds are intended to support activities that advance new research directions and enable innovative project development. Because the purpose of the program is to catalyze research innovation, the funds are strictly limited to project-related expenses and **may not be used for faculty salary support, course buyouts, or stipends**.

Category	Cost	Quantity/Unit	Total
Equipment			
Supplies			
Travel			
Student Research Assistants			
Consultants/Contracts			
Other Direct Costs			
Total Direct Costs			

Allowable Expenses: Funds must directly support the development or validation of an innovative technology or solution. Appropriate uses of funds may include the purchase of research supplies and materials needed for prototype development, fabrication or design of proof-of-concept technologies, specialized equipment or instrumentation necessary for testing, software or computing resources required to build or evaluate technological systems, or data acquisition needed to validate a new technology.

Funds may also support student research assistants who contribute to the development or testing of the technology, as well as travel necessary for technology testing, collaboration, or engagement with potential partners who may advance the innovation. All expenditures should clearly demonstrate how they contribute to technology advancement, prototype development, or innovation validation.

Non-Allowable Expenses: Because this program is designed to accelerate innovation and technology development, funds may not be used for faculty salary support, course releases, stipends, or administrative costs. Funds also may not be used for routine operational expenses or conference travel unrelated to advancing the proposed technology.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

All proposals submitted to the iTRANSCEND program must include the following components. Applications should be clear, concise, and aligned with the program's focus on innovation, translation, and revenue-generating outcomes.

1. Executive Summary (maximum 300 words)

Provide a succinct overview of the proposed project, including the innovation, the product or solution being developed, the target market or end user, and the anticipated impact. The summary should clearly articulate the value proposition and the potential for revenue generation or commercialization.

2. Project Narrative (maximum 4-pages)

The project narrative should provide sufficient detail to enable a thorough evaluation of the project's innovation, feasibility, and commercialization potential. Proposals should address the following elements:

- **Innovation and Product Focus:** Clearly describe the innovation and the specific product, platform, or solution to be developed. Explain how the proposed work represents a novel approach or advancement over existing solutions.
- **Translational Plan:** Outline the steps required to move the innovation toward a tangible, market-ready product, including prototype development, testing, validation, or refinement.
- **Market Opportunity and Revenue Potential:** Identify the target market, end users, and potential customers. Describe the revenue model (e.g., licensing, startup formation, service delivery, digital product, or other mechanisms) and the pathway to generating income.
- **Milestones and Deliverables:** Define clear, measurable milestones and expected outcomes within the project period.
- **Team and Partnerships:** Describe the expertise of the project team and any relevant collaborators, including industry, community, or institutional partners that will support product development and commercialization.
- **Feasibility and Sustainability:** Provide evidence that the project is achievable within the proposed timeline and resources, and describe the next steps beyond the award period, including plans for external funding or scale-up.

3. Budget and Budget Justification

Submit a detailed budget using the provided template, along with a justification that clearly explains how each cost supports the development, validation, and advancement of the proposed

product. Budgets should be reasonable, well-justified, and aligned with achieving project milestones and commercialization goals.

4. Curriculum Vitae

Provide a curriculum vitae for the Principal Investigator and any Co-Principal Investigators. Each CV must not exceed **two pages** and should highlight relevant experience, including prior work in innovation, translation, product development, commercialization, or externally funded research.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the degree of innovation and the potential of the project to lead to a new technology or applied solution. Reviewers will consider the novelty of the concept, the significance of the problem being addressed, and the potential impact of the technology if successfully developed. Additional criteria include the feasibility of the proposed development activities, the likelihood that the project will produce meaningful technical progress within the funding period, and the potential for the work to lead to external funding, intellectual property, partnerships, or commercialization opportunities. Projects that demonstrate clear pathways toward real-world application or technology translation will be viewed favorably.

Expected Outcomes: Awardees will be expected to provide a brief report describing project outcomes at the end of the funding period. Outcomes may include prototype development, proof-of-concept validation, technical data generation, intellectual property disclosures, external grant submissions, industry partnerships, or other indicators of technology advancement. Awardees may also be invited to present their work at a Research Innovation Showcase organized by the Division of Research and Engagement to highlight emerging technologies and innovative solutions developed at UNCG.

Submission Information: All proposals must be submitted electronically via InfoReady to the Division of Research and Engagement by **August 14, 2026 at 5:00 PM**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

