CARE-AI Seed Fund

About CARE-AI

The Centre for Advancing Responsible and Ethical Artificial Intelligence (CARE-AI) at the University of Guelph (U of G) integrates ethics, governance and social responsibility with technical leadership. Our researchers span from faculty across all Colleges on U of G's campus – working in one or more of the three core pillars: AI methodologies; AI applications; and AI responsibility. CARE-AI's mission is to advance multidisciplinary AI training and research, and its responsible application to foster economic growth and improve life. CARE-AI expands our research community's expertise and fosters a network of over 90 researchers and scholars from across campus. Our researchers apply AI and machine learning to U of G strengths, including human and animal health, environmental sciences, agriculture, agri-food, business, insurance and the bio-economy. We also develop methodologies, including learning algorithms, human-computer interfaces, data analytics, sensors and robotics, while ensuring that these new platforms are safe and benefit humanity. Researchers affiliated with CARE-AI work collaboratively with interdisciplinary departments, industry partners as well as other institutions to support CARE-AI's ecosystem.

AI Inspire Grants

The CARE-AI Seed Fund AI Inspire Grants support workshops, events, hackathons or seminars that bring thought leaders, researchers and practitioners in AI methodology, AI applications and/or AI responsibility to U of G. CARE-AI can assist in raising visibility and awareness of the initiative by circulating it through the CARE-AI community, and by funding up to $1,500 of direct costs. (Rolling intake, subject to available funding – check before applying)

AI Innovation Grants

The CARE-AI Seed Fund AI Innovation Grants are intended to encourage new research activity and interdisciplinary collaborations. AI Innovation Grants support the formation of interdisciplinary research collaborations that have the potential to achieve recognition on the national or international stage. CARE-AI will provide up to $5,000 per year for up to 2 years to support the direct costs of research. These

grants are intended to help spur new research initiatives and not support ongoing or related research activity. Previous CARE-AI Seed Fund recipients will be considered for funding at a lower priority than applicants that have not previously received funding in the evaluation process described below. Leveraging other sources of funding is encouraged. (Annual intake - annual deadline)

Details

CARE-AI's AI Innovation Grants support the formation of interdisciplinary research collaborations (including projects led by researchers in the social sciences, humanities or STEM fields) that have the potential to receive significant recognition. These grants are intended to spearhead new research initiatives. Leveraging other sources of funding is encouraged. The research projects are in the areas of AI methodology, AI applications or AI responsibility. The research and project initiatives must be led by University of Guelph faculty but can involve internal and external collaborators. Applicants are encouraged to include a description of anticipated in-kind support in their submission. CARE-AI awards are up to $5,000 per year for up to 2 years for the direct costs of research. policy, please contact the Research Office. Please note that indirect costs are ineligible under this program (indirect cost rate of 0%).

Eligibility

Applicants must be full-time continuing faculty members or other academic staff at U of G and be eligible to hold Tri-Agency grants. If you have any questions about the U of G's Eligibility for Research

There will be one applicant and any number of collaborators on each application. It is intended that the grant applicant be the principal investigator.

A grant applicant may only win one award per competition (up to $5,000 per year for up to 2 years). An individual may apply as the primary applicant for one application per competition. However, the individual can be a collaborator in other applications within a competition.

Applicants should be CARE-AI Affiliated Faculty, but collaborators do not have to be affiliated with CARE-AI. Funds must have a direct on-campus benefit and not be used to support expenses at other institutions (e.g. stipends for Non-U of G

students). Fees for consultants, either members of the research team or independent consultants, are not permitted.

Applications need to address IEDI related considerations and processes. This is a compliance requirement and not part of the evaluation criteria or ranking of applications.

Deadlines

November 11, 2026: Open to applications

December 9, 2026: All applications must be received electronically by 11:59 pm EST

Applicants should receive notice of their application status within 4-6 weeks after the deadline.

Evaluation Criteria

The Review Committee will only evaluate applications that include all the required components and meet eligibility as described above. The Review Committee will consider the following criteria: Relevance to the mission of CARE-AI addressing responsible and ethical AI concerns; Bringing together interdisciplinary U of G faculty teams; A clear description of the requested funds (financial budget); The importance of the AI Innovation Grant to the project; Future potential of the research.

Review Process

Applications are divided into two pools. Pool 1 is for applicants that have not previously received a CARE-AI Seed Fund award. Pool 2 is for applicants that have previously received an award from the CARE-AI Seed Fund. Pool 1 is evaluated before Pool 2. If funds remain after the applications in Pool 1 are awarded, Pool 2 applications are evaluated. In exceptional cases, previous CARE-AI Seed Fund recipients can request to be considered in Pool 1 if there are significant technical or project risks and substantial novelty exists. The project in the application cannot be related to any of the researcher's previous research activity (not just the previous project funded by the CARE-AI Seed Fund).

Applications will be reviewed by our Review Committee. After the deadline, applicants will be contacted within 4-6 weeks. Grants are adjudicated by an inter-disciplinary Review Committee and should be written in plain language.

The Review Committee will be formed once all applications are received. An Academic Co-Director, CARE-AI will Chair the Committee, however, have no vote or input in the review process. The Review Committee will be comprised of internal faculty and staff that have no conflict of interest.

How to Apply

Step 1: Fill out the CARE-AI Seed Fund Application Form (see attached)

Step 2: Compile the Supplementary Documentation (as outlined in CARE-AI Seed Fund Application Form)

Step 3: Combine Step 1-2 into a single PDF document and email your application directly to care-ai@uoguelph.ca with the subject line as CARE-AI Seed Fund Application.

More Information and Resources

Please do not hesitate to contact us directly at care-ai@uoguelph.ca should you have any further questions.

Reporting Documents

Recipients will be required to submit a report at the end of each year (first and final year) of the award to provide a brief summary and overview of the research outcomes from the AI Innovation award. A 10 % holdback will be kept until all final reporting documents are submitted.

Acknowledgement of Support

Successful applicants are expected to acknowledge CARE-AI in all public announcements, presentations or publications related to the research project