

# BAI RESEARCH CLUSTER GRANT PROGRAM RFP AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES



*Brown's signature strength and distinguishing principal of interdisciplinarity, alongside the integration of practice, scholarship, and artistic programs, bolster the mandate of the Institute to bring departments and faculty into closer collaborations, capitalize on existing interstitial energy between Brown's arts departments, and look ahead to engaging in innovative and previously unthinkable forms of creative inquiry.*

*Proposal to Establish a Brown Arts Institute, 2021*

**Overview:** A central mandate for BAI is to provide resources and infrastructure to support interdisciplinary collaborations among Brown arts faculty, and to supplement the creative and scholarly excellence of the arts departments by offering opportunities in the space between disciplines and departments. Brown is notable among its peers in supporting both arts practice and study as powerful and necessary forms of engagement with materials, environments, representations, ideas, and human problems, and BAI has a mandate to help unleash the unique capabilities of Brown faculty and students to “refresh the potential for new areas of practice and scholarship, and for the exuberant exploration of works that are multiple, layered, collaged, and forged beyond existing genres.” (Proposal, p.5)

To help unlock this remarkable potential for interdisciplinary and collaborative research in the arts, BAI proposes a new grant program to support clusters of Brown faculty for multi-year periods. The program will fund thematic research in the arts in which the collaborative efforts of faculty groups over several years can contribute to new forms of arts knowledge and practice. The program fills an existing lacuna in BAI funding opportunities for arts faculty, that currently focus on short-term support for discrete projects by individual faculty investigators. In contrast, the Research Cluster Grants program acknowledges that incubating new forms of practice and knowledge production, spanning multiple disciplines and domain expertise, and involving multiple faculty researchers, is a complex undertaking that requires time and sustained institutional commitment to thrive.

The Research Cluster Grant program is an incubation fund, intended to support faculty initiatives that are beyond the preliminary stage of exploration but that have not had an opportunity to profit from sustained support or benefit from collaborative exchange. The multi-year funding period and significant funding level are intended to provide sufficient time and resources to develop a mature research agenda, and test that agenda for post-award viability. It is anticipated that some research clusters will become loci of new interdisciplinary ARTS coursework supported by BAI; others will be seed beds for future certificate programs; and some might develop into durable centers of artistic excellence with ongoing projects and programming supported by internal and external funding.

The Research Cluster Grant program in the arts is envisioned as a signature addition to the Brown Arts ecosystem, and a concrete manifestation of the University's strategic commitment to arts pedagogy, scholarship, and practice.

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- **RFP:** BAI requests proposals from eligible faculty members for the inaugural cycle of the BAI Research Cluster Grant program. Complete proposals are due on September 1, 2023, and the funding cycle will begin January 1, 2024. Proposals are submitted electronically via [UFunds](#).
  - **Award:** A BAI Research Cluster Grant is an award of up to \$50,000 per year for a period of three years, totaling up to \$150,000 per funded cluster. BAI is able to fund up to two clusters per grant cycle.
  - **Eligibility:** All lecturer-track and tenure-track/tenured Brown faculty are eligible to submit a proposal on behalf of a research cluster.
  - **Research Cluster defined:** For purposes of this grant program, a research cluster is defined as two or more members from any academic discipline who are regular Brown faculty and whose assigned responsibilities include promoting ideas through the arts. Research clusters may also include other members, such as Brown adjunct professors, professors of the practice, post-doctoral fellows, and MFA or PhD students with teaching or research responsibilities at Brown during the period of the grant. Faculty from other institutions can be part of a cluster.
  - **Research in the Arts:** Research in the arts is broadly construed to include both arts practice and scholarship. For the purposes of this program, research themes should span the knowledge domains of more than one academic department or unit.
  - **Review Process:** Proposals will be reviewed by a BAI committee composed of chairs of Brown's arts departments, BAI academic and artistic leadership, at least one external member, and possibly ad hoc faculty with specific subject matter expertise. Successful applicants will be notified by October 15, 2023.
  - **Submission Format:** Please limit your proposal to no more than five pages, not including CVs of the proposed cluster members and chair's approval in an appendix. Proposals should provide the following information.
    - 1) **Lead researchers:** Provide names of at least two lecturer-track or tenure-track Brown faculty who will serve as grant leaders.

**Cluster members:** Provide the names and institutional affiliations of all other members of the proposed research cluster. Briefly describe the individual and collective strengths of this research group, with a focus on the interdisciplinary reach of the proposed cluster.
    - 2) **Research initiative (2–3 pages):** Provide a summary of the proposed research initiative.
    - 3) Describe the creative/scholarly context in which the work is situated, and to which the work will contribute.
    - 4) **Work plan and budget:** Provide a work plan for the proposed research and a tentative budget for the proposed work. If there are new academic programs that might emerge from your research (innovative courses, workshops for students, certificate programs, future concentrations or degree tracks) please identify them. Please describe significant resources other than BAI grant funding that the cluster will require to pursue the research, including access to specialized space, equipment, and staff. If external resources are anticipated (corporate or foundation support/ external grants/in-kind donations/etc.), please identify these resources and related contingencies.

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- 5) **Measures of success:** Briefly describe how you would define and measure success. What are the key milestones/timelines for your project?
  - 6) **Chairs' approval:** all Brown faculty members included in a proposed cluster must secure their department chairs' approval prior to submitting a proposal.
  - 7) **Appendix:** Please provide CVs for all members of the proposed research cluster. Chairs' approval in the form of an email or short letter should also be included in the appendix.
- **Criteria:** The review committee will be especially attentive to the following criteria when reviewing submissions.
    - 1) **Fit to mission:** BAI is a university-wide research enterprise and catalyst for the arts at Brown that creates new work and supports, amplifies, and adds new dimensions to the creative practices of Brown's arts departments, faculty, students, and community.
    - 2) **Interdisciplinary range:** BAI is committed to supporting art scholarship and practice in the interstitial spaces between disciplines. This grant program seeks to support creative research among faculty, artists, and scholars whose work spans more than one discipline.
    - 3) **Impact:** BAI actively seeks to support work that has an impact on communities both within the campus and beyond.
    - 4) **Audacity:** BAI encourages ambitious proposals. We suspect that there might well be years of pent-up creative verve among Brown arts faculty. Please feel invited to project boldly into the future, using this grant program as a launchpad.