

Hokkaido University and University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Call for joint research seed fund proposals  
Guidelines for applicants

The University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst, UMA) and Hokkaido University (HU) seek to grow their collaboration by establishing the *UMA-HU Joint Research Seed Fund*. The aim of the program is to support the development of new collaborations through organized research visits, collaborative meetings, workshops, or seminars, with UMA and HU contributing seed funds. Up to eight Principal Investigators (PIs) will be funded in 2026, with four to be awarded at Hokkaido and the other four at UMass Amherst. Projects leading to long-term collaborations and sustained research relationships, and generating publications, exhibitions, and/or grants for external funding will be prioritized for funding.

Project proposals should articulate a connection with one of the following themes:

- Advanced Agriculture (including Regenerative and Digital Agriculture)
- Blue/Green Economy, Sustainability and Planetary Boundaries
- Future of Food
- Polymer Science and Engineering (including Soft Matter and Advanced Materials)
- Advanced Manufacturing

Details of the partnerships between Hokkaido University and the University of Massachusetts Amherst can be found here: <https://www.global.hokudai.ac.jp/global/the-university-of-massachusetts-amherst>

### Scope of Program

This seed funding program supports UMA and HU collaborators in convening a research visit, collaborative meeting, workshop, or research seminar in Amherst or Hokkaido.

Proposals should be led by a UMA and a HU faculty member to establish a new/emerging collaboration or target identified extramural funding for an existing relationship. Applications from researchers with well-established collaborations will only be considered if they clearly articulate a commitment to targeting identified extramural funding opportunities.

There is no limit to the number of academic staff members who can participate in proposals, with the involvement of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) strongly encouraged. Interdisciplinary proposals, involving researchers from different disciplines and faculties, are also strongly encouraged.

## Funding Available

**Three grants up to \$8,000** will be funded for new/emerging collaborations, and 1 **grant up to \$20,000** will be funded for PIs with commitments to submit a proposal to an identified extramural funding opportunity.

PIs should request funds based on the scope of their proposed activities, providing a justification for the costs. UMA and HU will transfer funds directly to PIs respectively. Funds can be combined with other funding resources unless the other funding sources have restrictions for combined use.

Projects should be planned to start from 1 April 2026, with grant spending completed by 31 March 2027 for HU PIs and August 31, 2027, for UMA PIs. Funds not spent by the end of the funding period will be transferred back to UMA or HU so that unspent balances can be reallocated.

Applicants of the HU-UMA Joint Research Seed Fund 2026 will be later invited to apply for the 2027 HU J-PEAKS Collaborative Research Platform Funds, which will be budgeted by the *Program for Forming Japan's Peak Research Universities (J-PEAKS)* by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan; 1 Fund up to ¥5M for a HU PI.

The summary below outlines the eligible and ineligible costs to be included in the budget, noting that fund administration at UMA or HU reserve the right to determine the eligibility of costs.

Eligible costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travel costs for the PIs (faculty) and other UMA and HU researchers named in the proposal, including research associate/postdoctoral fellows. This includes flights, accommodation, and subsistence.</li><li>• Funds can include outward travel costs to visit UMA or HU and/or inward ones to invite UMA or HU researchers named in the proposal.</li><li>• Other costs associated with organizing workshops, seminars, and meetings between the two universities</li><li>• International journal submission fees for joint research papers</li><li>• Research or experiment-related software purchases required for research collaborations between the two universities</li><li>• Costs to assist with grant application preparation such as grant-writing, copy-editing, or graphics services</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research costs, including consumables and existing staff time</li><li>• Faculty salaries, including summer salaries and costs to buy out of teaching or other assigned responsibilities</li><li>• Directly incurred staff costs, for example, Research/Teaching Assistants</li><li>• Scholarships, tuition, and fees for students</li><li>• Honoraria of any kind</li><li>• Conference attendance fees</li></ul>

## Eligibility Criteria

Applications must be led by a UMA or HU faculty member and include a letter acknowledging a collaboration commitment by a counterpart at HU or UMA to participate in the proposal.

PIs must hold a faculty or librarian appointment at UMA or HU with research as part of their assigned duties at the time of application and for the duration of the award.

Faculty with joint appointments between UMA or HU and another institution should ensure that their appointing institution(s)/organization(s) are aware of their application and safeguard against any possible conflicts of interest, etc.

## Evaluation of Projects

The proposals will be reviewed according to the following criteria

- **Alignment with themes.** Does the proposal clearly articulate a connection to one of the themes described above? What is the strength of that connection?
- **Collaborator complementarity:** What is the added value of the new or emerging collaboration? How does the proposed activity combine mutual areas of interest and strength?
- **Desired impact:** What desired outcomes do the planned activities set out to achieve? What are the anticipated benefits of the proposal or its desired outcomes for local or international communities?
- **Capacity for future collaboration/funding:** For the \$8,000 awards, applicants should address: What is the potential for this proposal to foster ongoing collaboration, and through what mechanisms? How well does the proposed collaboration plan to access or pursue external funding? In the case of the \$20,000 award, applicants will be required to commit to pursuing specific extramural funding opportunities through granting agencies, industry partnerships or foundations. Specificity of targeted opportunity will be rated highly as part of the evaluation process.

## Reporting and Publications

Successful PIs will be required to submit a report within one month of the formal completion date of the project. This report needs to outline the activities undertaken, grant expenditure breakdown, opportunities that have been identified, and future planned actions for the research program.

Any publications (e.g., abstracts, articles) or dissemination of research (e.g. public presentations) arising from activities supported by this Grant should acknowledge financial assistance received from the HU-UMA Joint Research Seed Fund. Copies of the publications and/or information about the presentations should be included in the above report or notification provided to the Office for International Collaborations at HU and the Office of Global Affairs at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The title for acknowledgment is "UMA-HU Joint Research Seed Fund, provided by Hokkaido University and University of Massachusetts Amherst."

## Change of Investigator and Extensions

If circumstances change – for example, the PI or a team member leaves the project – awardees must provide notification to the Office for International Collaborations at HU and the Office of Global Affairs at UMA. All changes must be approved in writing.

## Call Timeline

Call opens	5 December 2025
Application deadline	2 February 2026 at 17:00 (for each university)
Announcement of selections	March 2026
Funding periods	1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 (HU) 1 April 2026 to 31 August 2027 (UMA)

## Application Process

Applications written on the designated application form should be submitted to PI's home institution (HU or UMA) via email by **2 February 2026 at 17:00 (Hokkaido and Amherst)**. Applications should be written in English and for an audience proficient, but not expert, in the field. For both HU and UMA PIs to receive dual funding, each PI needs to apply to / and be selected individually by their home institution.

## Contacts

For inquiries on the HU-UMA Joint Research Seed Fund or potential counterpart researcher matching, please contact either of the following contact points:

### HU PIs

Taena Uemura, Senior Academic Specialist (International), Office for International Collaborations, Hokkaido University

Email: [taenau@oia.hokudai.ac.jp](mailto:taenau@oia.hokudai.ac.jp) / [grants@research.hokudai.ac.jp](mailto:grants@research.hokudai.ac.jp)

### UMA PIs

Eric Wirth, Manager of Global Partnerships, Vice Provost's Office of Global Affairs, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Email: [ewirth@umass.edu](mailto:ewirth@umass.edu)

## Application Form

### HU-UMA Joint Research Seed Fund 2026-2027

#### Applicant Information

First Name	Last Name	Title
Department	College/School/Faculty/Research Center	Email

#### Proposal

Please choose the budget scale of your proposal.		(For those who apply for 20,000 USD grant,) would you conduct the proposed exchange even with a reduced grant as 8,000 USD?	
Up to 8,000 USD    or    Up to 20,000 USD			
Please identify your collaborator and secure their commitment in principle with a letter of acknowledgement.			
Host Faculty Name	Title	Department	Campus
Outline the initial contact with a faculty partner at Hokkaido University/University of Massachusetts Amherst.			
Duration of Activity	Proposed Start Date	Proposed End Date	
Provide a short description of the proposed partnership. (750 words total for this question and the next one on outcomes).			
Expected outcomes.			

### Abstract (75 words)

**Provide a short abstract of proposal (no more than 75 words) that, if funded, could be used for publicity and notice.**

### Budget Proposal – Cost Estimates

Please attach a project budget in spreadsheet form, indicating any co-funding or in-kind support from your College/School/Unit or project partner(s). Detail all financial implications of the proposed activities (e.g.: software, travel expenses, accommodation, etc.).

### Supporting Documents (Optional)

You may attach additional information that helps to explain your research or clarify an aspect of your application. This can include, but is not limited to, images, diagrams, tables or graphs.

### Letter of Acknowledgement

Please include a letter acknowledging from your Hokkaido University/University of Massachusetts partner confirming their support of your proposal.

### Sign & Date

<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

# Report Form

## HU-UMA Joint Research Seed Fund 2026-2027

<b>Dates</b>		
<b>Venue (if any)</b>		
<b>HU PI</b>	Name	
	Job Title	
	Affiliation	
	E-mail Address	
<b>UMA PI</b>	Name	
	Job Title	
	Affiliation	
	E-mail Address	
<b>Overview of the Funded Activities</b> *Project goals, the extent to which the aims and objectives were achieved, etc. **Any URLs, photos, figures, workshop flier, etc. for reference can be added here or in separate documents.		
<b>Outcomes from the Funded Activities</b> *Planned publications, grant applications, co-teaching module planning, etc.		
<b>Report on the Fund</b>		
Total		USD or JPY