**VISTA** VISION: SCIENCE TO APPLICATIONS

**YORK UNIVERSITY**

# VISTA Request for Proposals
# Summer 2019

## Background

In 2016 York University was awarded a seven-year Canada First Research Excellence Fund grant entitled "Vision: Science to Applications (VISTA)". Funds have been allocated for a research grant programme open to core members of the VISTA research group. This Request for Proposals represents an initial rapid call for applications. A second regular call, and subsequent calls, will be issued in the summer on what will be the regular schedule for the competition.

## Research Objectives

The mandate of VISTA is to advance visual science through research that spans computational and biological perspectives and results in real-world applications. To this end, the research grant programme will focus on funding that promotes the goals of the VISTA award. In particular, there will be an emphasis on proposals that embody interdisciplinarity (i.e. a biological and computational focus) and an engagement with VISTA partners, both established and new.

For this initial rapid call, proposals building on partnerships established during the CFREF application process will be prioritized. This is based on the recognition that expansion of our partner network will likely only occur later in the CFREF funding period. The timing of the regular call will be to capitalize on the interactions to come from the annual meeting.

## Funding Available and Conditions of Funding

For this first rapid call, 50% of the annual funding will be available for a minimum of 3 awards. This equals $150,000 of the $300,000/year allocated for awards. Only core VISTA members may be Principal Investigators.

Duration of each grant is a maximum of 2 years for a total of $50,000. One may also apply for one year of funding with the potential to reapply for a second year.

The funds are not to be used as bridging funds for existing grants. The intent of CFREF is not to replicate existing funding, but to provide an opportunity to leverage new funds, or perhaps move in a different direction.

The project must be in collaboration with an external partner (academic, public or private sector) or must involve at least 2 VISTA Core/Associate members.

All manuscripts arising from the projects must be submitted to Innovation York at innovationyork@yorku.ca for Intellectual Property (IP) review prior to final publication.

## Proposal Guidelines

The deadline for the submission of proposals is 5pm (EST), **June 28, 2019**. Research proposals should use at least 11-point Arial font with a minimum of one-inch margins on all sides.

Page limits should be adhered to as listed below, in particular a maximum 5 pages for the research proposal sections. Any additional pages will be deleted prior to review. All submissions must include a signature (digital or scanned) from the Principle Investigator. Please submit proposals to **applyvista@yorku.ca**.

Each proposal should address all sections described below.

## GENERAL INFORMATION (*not included in proposal 5-page max*)

- Cover page with the following information:
    1. Project title.
    2. Name, title, and institutional affiliation of principal investigator (project leader).
    3. List of names, titles and institutional/industry affiliations of any additional investigators or collaborators. CVs of PI and all co-investigators should be included in the appendix section.
    4. Signature (digital or scanned) of the Principle Investigator.
- Describe the skills/experience of the proposed project team and the value-added for proposed collaborations (1/2 page).
- Describe productivity and involvement of primary PI in VISTA-related research studies & activities (1/2 page).

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL *(5 pages maximum in total)*

### Section A: Lay summary (300 words max)
Please provide a summary of the research question, objectives, approach, relationship to the goals of VISTA, and expected outcomes/ impact of the proposed project. This summary may be used for public communications and thus should be targeted for the layperson.

### Section B: Project Description - Approach/Methodology/Objectives (3 pages)
Describe the proposed research approach/methodology. Please include:
- The design of the research project and rationale, including why the proposed research is novel and/or innovative;
- Clearly state the research question being proposed, the rationale for the proposed research, and the objectives of the project;
- Describe how the research builds on established partnerships, or enables the establishment of new partnerships;
- Realistic milestones achievable within a one- or two-year time period, including research ethics approvals, as appropriate.

### Section C: Potential Impact and Relevance to VISTA mandate (1 page)
This section should be targeted for the layperson and is especially important for stage two of the review process. It should clearly describe the project's potential impact within the mandate of VISTA. Please address:

- The potential impact for the project on vision science in terms of new breakthroughs, innovation in industrial application or clinical practice, or knowledge translation/application.
- Specific actions that will be undertaken (both within and beyond the scope of this proposal) to ensure that the potential impact is realized (i.e., the results of this research result in tangible applications to vision research).
- How the project is relevant to the specific VISTA themes as defined in the research objectives section of this RFP.

**APPENDIX (*not included in the 5-page max proposal*):**

1. **Tables & Figures (2 pages max)** - Two additional pages may be included for tables/figures. Please note that any additional pages beyond two will be deleted prior to sending for review.

2. **Budget (1-page max)** - Please provide a brief but specific budget that includes the levels of salary support, research trainee support, research equipment and materials, and other expenses. In addition, if any partner funding will be used towards the research project, please indicate the level of both in-kind and cash contributions anticipated. Present a clear rationale for the proposed expenditures. If the funds will be flowing to multiple sites, provide a clear breakdown of where the funds will be flowing.

Please note that:
- Personnel funding levels should be consistent with the applicant's institutional minimum and maximum limits for research staff and trainees; trainee stipend amounts should be consistent with the higher of either the applicant's institutional minimums or minimums recommended by Tri-Council Policy;
- Grant funds cannot be used to provide matching funds for VISTA Graduate Scholarships or VISTA Postdoctoral Awards.
- Proposed expenditures should be consistent with CFREF's guidelines on eligible expenditures; and
- Indirect costs shall not be considered eligible for this programme.
- A list of eligible expenses is provided as a guide. For any questions related to the eligibility of research costs, please contact adminvista@yorku.ca.
- Budget categories should follow the categories listed in the list of eligible expenses. Please provide a breakdown by category and per fiscal year, ending March 31st.

3. **Curriculum Vitae or Bios** - Please provide your most recent NSERC or CIHR common CV.

4. **References (1-page max)** – One additional page may be included in the appendix for references.

*Please turn over for evaluation process and criteria.*

## Evaluation Process and Criteria for Review

**All project submissions will undergo a two-stage review process by the Research Coordinating Committee, which includes the Committee Lead plus 3 VISTA core members.**

**In the first review**, Research Coordinating Committee members will review each proposal to ensure that it meets the application criteria, will assess the appropriateness of the proposed budget, the feasibility of completion within the proposed timeframe, and the overall quality of the applicant and the partnership engagement. Each project will be rated on a 5-point scale and only proposals achieving an average score of 4.0 or higher will proceed to the second review.

**In the second review**, applications will be reviewed by a minimum of two external reviewers. External reviewers include at least a minimum of one reviewer from outside the University. One reviewer should have expertise in biological vision and one should have expertise in computer vision. Each proposal will be reviewed for its potential to have an impact on moving the mandate of VISTA forward, relevance to the mandate of VISTA, and the potential for leveraging larger funding applications. Sections A & C of the research proposal (described in the Proposal Guidelines section above) will be especially important during this second review. Each project will be given an impact ranking of LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH.

**Final ranking by the RCC will be based on a combination of project excellence score and impact ranking and the RCC will recommend project approval to the VISTA Board.**

For statistical purposes, applications will also be evaluated in the context of the VISTA Equity Plan, which requires representation from designated groups in the categories of gender and visible minorities, aboriginal persons and persons with disabilities.

## Key Dates

Notice of Intent deadline:              June 28, 2019
Deadline for proposal submission:       July 12, 2019
Results announced:                      August 30, 2019