

Global Impact Awards

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2026-2027

Virginia Commonwealth University's Global Education Office (GEO) is pleased to announce the **2026-2027 Global Impact Awards**, a funding opportunity designed to support innovative projects that advance VCU's global engagement. At least **ten awards of up to \$5,000** will be offered for projects to support the development, strengthening, or expansion of international academic partnerships and global learning opportunities. The awards provide targeted support for faculty and staff to create sustainable, high-impact initiatives that align with VCU's strategic goals and expand the university's global footprint.

Priority areas

To diversify VCU's global engagement, proposals are encouraged to focus on the following priority regions and partnerships of strategic interest. At least one award per priority region/partnership is anticipated:

- **Portugal**
- **Vietnam**
- **South Korea**
- **Brazil**

Awards focus

The Global Impact Awards support initiatives that develop new global learning opportunities, and/or strengthen international academic partnerships, including, but not limited to:

- **Education Abroad:** Short-term, faculty-led programs that promote academic and financial sustainability and expand access to study abroad. Funding is intended for full-time faculty, departments, or schools seeking significant increases in participation through new programs integrated into departmental curricula. Priority is given to units not yet offering established opportunities. Proposed programs should operate between December 2026-August 2027, following guidelines in the [Education Abroad Faculty Leader Handbook](#). A separate [new faculty-led program proposal](#) must also be submitted to GEO.
- **Domestic Study Away with a Global Focus:** Funding supports the development of new domestic short-term U.S.-based programs aligned with the [United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#). Proposed programs should operate December 2026-August 2027. Funding may cover a faculty site visit August-December 2026 to explore potential destinations. Applicants must follow the [Faculty Leader Handbook](#) and submit a separate [new domestic program proposal](#) to GEO.
- **Virtual Exchange (COIL):** Virtual exchange, also known as COIL, or Collaborative Online International Learning, is an excellent way to increase access to global education, and help students develop intercultural agility and other skills that will benefit them academically and professionally through integration into existing courses (watch this video for more on [virtual exchange](#)).
- **Collaborative research or teaching initiatives:** Awards funds can be used to support faculty in their scholarly and academic work with international partners, including joint grant proposal development, shared research, research seminars/working groups, co-taught courses/seminars, curriculum mapping, collaborative assignment development, etc.

- **Guest lecture instruction** (incoming or outgoing): Faculty may propose funding to visit a [partner](#) (or prospective partner) institution abroad, or bring international partners to campus for activities such as guest lectures, VCU Globe Speakers Series talks, short-term teaching, research collaboration, and other initiatives that promote the partnership and enrich the campus community.
- **Enrollment agreement development or joint exchange program:** Faculty may propose the use of award funds to further explore the development or continued fostering of articulation agreements with existing or new international partners, with preference given to those working within the above mentioned priority areas.
- **Conference or workshop collaboration:** These awards are not intended to fund one-time events or attendance at professional meetings but rather would support high-impact faculty experiences or ongoing research collaborations with specific outcomes, such as important publications.

Award details

While no fixed number of the awards has been set, we anticipate awarding **ten grants of up to \$5,000 each**. The final number and amount of awards will depend on the merits of each proposal as determined by reviewers. Successful applicants will be expected to work closely with staff in GEO's Global Learning and Partnerships department for guidance and support in project development.

- **Award amounts:** Up to \$5,000 per project (except the L & L Friendship Fund Global Access Grant, which is up to \$20,000)
- **Number of awards:** At least ten awards; final number depends on proposal merit
- **Use of funds:** May cover faculty/staff travel, site visits, program development, program marketing, and partner visits. Funds are not intended for one-time events, professional meetings, general equipment (unless program-specific), or direct student subsidies (except L & L award). Remaining funds may be reallocated with GEO approval.
- **Reporting and credit:** Recipients must submit a final report by June 30, 2027, and provide promotional credit to GEO. GEO understands that unforeseen circumstances may arise; however, paused or incomplete projects, or delayed reporting may affect the applicant's or unit's competitiveness for future Global Impact Awards. In such cases, GEO may consult with awardees and their departments regarding possible return or reallocation of unspent funds.
- **Eligibility:** Open to full-time VCU faculty and staff only. Limit one proposal per applicant.

Proposal requirements

All proposals must be submitted via [the online submission form](#) and include:

- Project summary:** Description of proposed activities, goals, and deliverables
- Relevance:** Connection to current programming and unit priorities
- Partner roles:** Role and relevance of international or external partners
- Outcomes and impact:** Anticipated outcomes and impact on campus internationalization
- Evaluation plan:** Plan for assessing the impact of the proposed development activities
- Timeline:** Schedule of activities to develop the project and final deliverables for the project
- Budget narrative:** Requested award amount, purpose, and any cost sharing provided by department or other source (cost sharing is not required)

Letter(s) of support: From department chair(s) or unit director(s) for all units involved, addressing alignment with unit goals

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on:

- Alignment with VCU Quest 2028 and/or One VCU Research Strategic Priorities
- Feasibility and sustainability
- Commitment from VCU units and external partners
- Creativity and innovation
- Reflection of national best practices
- Track record of implementing complex initiatives
- For Global Learning-related proposals: alignment with UN SDGs, promise of sustained student enrollment in the program, and affordability
- For returning applicants: responsible management of previous GEO awards

Timeline

- **Proposal Deadline:** Monday, March 16, 2026
- **Award Notification:** By Friday, May 1, 2026
- **Award Period:** Funds must be used by June 30, 2027
- **Final Report:** by June 30, 2027

Contact

For questions or guidance on proposal development, please contact:

- Dr. Jill Blondin, Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, jblondin@vcu.edu
- Stephanie Tignor, Executive Director of Global Learning, davenportse@vcu.edu
- Sarah Carrier, Director of Global Partnerships, syoung8@vcu.edu