# WILLIAM & MARY
## GLOBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

# Which GRI Program Is Right for You?

## Three Ways to Develop Research with GRI

GRI offers three complementary programs to help faculty and staff develop their research, from early exploration to acceleration and sustainability. GRI supports collaborative research on real-world issues.

While researchers who work as solitary scholars can benefit from some of this programming, most of these programs are designed for researchers who are interested in building (or being a part of) a larger collaborative team. These programs are designed to work together—and you may participate in multiple simultaneously—but do not need to be pursued in sequence.

## At a Glance

|  | Pathfinder Groups | Seed Funding | Accelerate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Best for... | Exploring broad research interests/themes with collaborators | Testing ideas with pilot studies in order to seek external funders | Scaling proven research programs |
| Award | $1K stipend ($1.5k for facilitators) | Up to $20,000 | Up to $300,000 |
| Staff Support | Support from the Director of Research, a dedicated Senior Research Manager, Finance Team | Support from the Director of Research, a dedicated Senior Research Manager, Grants Specialist, Comms & Finance Team | Support from the Director of Research, a dedicated Senior Research Manager, Grants Specialist, Comms & Finance Team |
| Duration | 9 months (one academic year) | 1 year | Up to 3 years |
| Format | Monthly cohort meetings of up to 10 people | Early-stage research project with strong | Major research program seeking to |

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|  |  | potential to attract external funding | become a sustainable initiative/project/center |
|---|---|---|---|
| Proposal | 2 pages | 3 pages | 5 pages |
| Deadline | February 15, 2026 | February 15, 2026 | February 15, 2026 |
| Start | September 2026 | September 2026 | September 2026 |
| # Awards *pending funding availability* | Up to 4 cohorts | Up to 3 projects | Up to 2 projects |

Though these paths are distinct in their offerings and requirements, all successful proposals will be able to demonstrate the following to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the stage of the project:

1. **Real-world impact potential:** Will new knowledge make a difference?
2. **External funding pathway:** Can this attract funding sufficient to sustain impactful research?
3. **Research quality:** Is this rigorous and innovative?
4. **Student partnership:** Are students genuine research partners?

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## Decision Guide: Where Do I Start?

*Pathfinder*

"I have a big question but haven't narrowed it down yet."

→ Explore with collaborators you know and don't yet know

"I want to build a research team for future proposals."

→ Build relationships and collaborations with other researchers and GRI staff

*Seed Funding*

"I have a specific idea I want to test with a pilot study"

→ Get preliminary data that can help catalyze larger funding proposal

"I need funding to strengthen an external grant proposal"

→Generate the data and findings that funders want to see before making a larger investment

## Accelerate Funding

"I have pilot results or an established research program and want to expand this program and make it sustainable."

→ Grow with comprehensive support

"I have strong preliminary results and established partnerships with funders, practitioners, and/or research collaborators."

→ Ready for major acceleration

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## Breakdown of the Specific Options:

## Pathfinder Groups: Explore Big Questions Together

Pathfinder Groups are directly supported by a Senior Research Manager to provide organizational and logistical support.

## What You Get

- Join a cohort of 4-6 faculty/staff + 2-3 students exploring"big questions" in critical issue areas that could include individuals from multiple disciplinary backgrounds
- Monthly seminars that your cohort designs with support (September-May)
- Visiting experts and GRI skills workshops
- Stipend: $1.5K for group facilitators, $1K for faculty/staff members, $500 for students
- Feedback on emerging research ideas/proposals from GRI staff, GRI leadership, and from visiting scholars/practitioners

## What You Do

- Propose a theme that you would like to explore with others
- Come with potential collaborators or apply as an individual with an idea
- Attend monthly seminars
- Engage in collaborative research development
- Create deliverables your cohort chooses (grant proposals, papers, briefs, etc.)

## Who Should Apply to Join a Pathfinder Group

Faculty/staff who:
- Want to explore new questions that could benefit from a range of perspectives
- Want to develop your existing research or grow into an adjacent area
- Interested in building or joining collaborative teams
- Have a "big question" but not yet a specific research design
- Want to connect research to policy/practice contexts
- Enjoy participating in/facilitating intellectual conversations with uncertain outcomes

## Timeline

- Application Window: January 15, 2026—February 15, 2026
- Decisions: March 2026
- Intro Meeting: March-April 2026
- Cohort begins work: September 2026

## Seed Funding: Pilot Your Research Ideas

Seed Funding recipients will get administrative and logistical support from the Senior Research Manager as well as feedback and strategic guidance from the Director of Research.

## What You Get

- Up to $20,000
- Funding for students, data collection, equipment, travel, etc.
- Research development trainings
- Grant proposal development support
- Administrative support
- Connections to GRI community and potential implementers/community partners/funders

## What You Do

- Apply with 3-page proposal describing pilot study
- Conduct research with meaningful student engagement
- Submit external grant proposals during and after pilot
- Report progress to GRI
- Present findings at GRI seminar

## Who Should Apply

- Have specific research idea to test
- Need preliminary data for major grant proposals
- Want to build external partnerships
- Ready to engage students as research partners
- Can identify specific future funding opportunities in seed grant proposal

## Timeline

- Application Window: January 15, 2026—February 15, 2026
- Decisions: March 2026
- Projects start: September 2026

## Accelerate: Scale Your Research Program

Accelerate funding recipients will get administrative and logistical support from the Senior Research Manager as well as feedback and strategic guidance from the Director of Research.

## What You Get

- Up to $300,000 over up to three years
- Dedicated Senior Research Manager for your project
- Full fiscal, administrative, and communications support
- Grant development coaching
- Partnership facilitation
- Access to comprehensive GRI infrastructure to administer and disseminate research

## What You Do

- Apply with 5-page proposal addressing research agenda
- Conduct major research program with annual milestone reviews
- Publish peer reviewed and public facing research

- Submit multiple external grant proposals over 3 years
- Engage students throughout
- Maintain strong external partnerships
- Report progress and meet benchmarks for continued funding

## Who Should Apply

- Have proof of concept or strong preliminary results
- Established external funding partnerships (letter required)
- Ready to grow a sustainable research enterprise with real-world impact
- Strong track record and research team with capacity to execute the proposed research
- Clear pathway to major external funding (federal grants, foundations, corporate contracts)
- Can manage complex, multi-year research programs

## Timeline

- Application: January 15, 2026 - February 15, 2026
- Decisions: March
- Projects start: September 2026

## Key Requirements Comparison

| Requirement | Pathfinder | Seed Funding | Accelerate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student engagement | Yes—students in cohort required | Yes—required | Yes—required |
| External Funder | Not required | Not Required | Required (with letter) |
| Grant submissions | Strongly encouraged by May/June | 1+ expected | 5 required over 3 years |
| Pilot/preliminary data and findings | No | No | Strongly encouraged |

| Regular reviews | Informal check-ins with Senior Research Manager | Mid- and end-of-year progress report | Semi-annual milestones (continuation decisions made in consultation with GRI Leadership) |
|---|---|---|---|