

Faculty of Arts Signature Areas of Research & Creative Collaboration

Introduction

The Faculty of Arts' Academic Strategic Plan – which was endorsed by Arts Faculty Council in November 2017 – includes a commitment to *“Develop networks of research and creative activity by identifying, developing, and promoting a set of established and emerging signature areas of research, research creation, and teaching.”* A plan for acting on this commitment has been crafted through a process of consultation that included receiving input from the Faculty's Research Committee, the Academic Strategic Plan Committee, and Chairs Council.

While recognizing areas of established research excellence, the Faculty's signature area initiative is designed to provide a mechanism for building research networks, facilitating collaboration, advancing cross-disciplinary research and creative activities, and enabling related teaching innovations. The initiative will, moreover, support successful grant seeking, build collective reputations, and position research networks rooted in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts to become university-wide signature areas.

In recognition of the Academic Strategic Plan's emphasis on collaborative and cross-disciplinary research, and the Faculty's commitment to research, research creation, and creative activity, the Faculty of Arts' signature areas will be known as **Signature Areas of Research and Creative Collaboration**.

The identification of signature areas marks an important moment of priority setting for the Faculty. During the life of the current Academic Strategic Plan, key decisions related to resource allocation and significant matters such as the allocation and delineation of research chairs will be taken in light of the Faculty's commitment to its signature areas.

Supporting the Faculty's Signature Areas

The Faculty of Arts is committed to providing supports to its signature areas. The form and content of this support will evolve based on needs and available resources, but may include:

- Funding to support targeted teaching release and graduate research assistance.
- Working with the Board of the Kule Institute for Advanced Study (KIAS) to develop targeted cost-shared Kule Research Team Grants to support signature area teams
- Directing the Arts Collaboration Enterprise (ACE), Arts Research Centre (ARC), and other Faculty units to provide:
 - Essential administrative and communications support
 - Short term space
 - Meeting and conference logistics
 - Web and technology supports
 - Support for advancement initiatives
 - Support for major grant applications
- Working with UAlberta Libraries in areas such as:
 - Digital initiatives
 - Collections

Selection Criteria

This initiative aims to support networks of related and collaborating researchers and creative artists focused on typically cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship. Proposals must identify a small leadership team with innovative plans for research or creative activity, collaboration, and grant seeking.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following broad criteria:

- **The character of the research network:**
 - Evidence of a critical mass of committed researchers representing an impressive breadth and depth of research or creative expertise, including scholars with national and international reputations
 - Research and collaborative networks that extend across campus and beyond UAlberta are not essential, but will be viewed positively
- **Social relevance and scholarly merit:**
 - Evidence of innovative plans for socially relevant and timely research or creative activities, productive collaborations, and network building
 - Evidence of a shared research agenda of scholarly merit
- **Material benefits to the Faculty of Arts:**
 - Evidence of plans or potential for grant seeking that will advance research agendas and benefit UAlberta researchers and graduate students
- **Integration of teaching:**
 - Evidence of a commitment to the integration of teaching and research and enthusiasm for teaching innovations
- **Equity, diversity, and inclusion:**
 - Evidence of a commitment to research agendas and collaborative undertakings that advance the goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the academy

Adjudication

The Associate Dean (Research) will support those developing proposals for signature areas of research and creative collaboration. This may include commenting on draft submissions, helping make links between researchers with closely related or overlapping proposals, and providing strategic advice aimed at strengthening proposals.

The Faculty of Arts Research Committee will be responsible for identifying the Faculty's Signature Areas of Research and Creative Collaboration. Upon receiving proposals, the Research Committee:

- May opt to develop a short list of proposals
- May hold information sessions with leaders of key proposals
- Will seek input from Chairs Council
- Will involve the Dean of Arts in its final decision-making meeting(s)
- May invite the Vice-President (Research) or Associate VPR to attend final decision-making meeting(s)

Timelines

The signature area initiative is loosely tied to the life of the current Academic Strategic Plan. The goal is to support up to seven signature areas for a period of five years, with the first three signature areas launched in fall 2018. Additional signature areas will then be identified and launch in 2019 and 2020.

- First call for proposals: [March 2018](#)
- First deadline: [July 16, 2018](#)
- First adjudication: [September/October 2018](#)
- Decision & launch: [October 2018](#)
- Second and third waves to follow

Year	First Wave	Second Wave	Third Wave	Number of active Signature Areas
2018	Identify first 3 Signature Areas			
2018-2019	Year 1	Identify next 2 Signature Areas		3
2019-2020	Year 2	Year 1	Identify next 2 Signature Areas	5
2020-2021	Year 3	Year 2	Year 1	7
2021-2022	Year 4	Year 3	Year 2	7
2022-2023	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3	7
2023-2024		Year 5	Year 4	4
2024-2025			Year 5	2