

Prototype Fund Allowable Budget Items

The Prototype Fund is designed to support innovators and creators in the crucial early stages of developing prototypes and minimum viable products (MVPs). By providing essential funding, the fund aims to bridge the gap between conceptual ideas and tangible, testable prototypes. This support covers a range of expenses that are directly related to the creation, development, and initial testing phases of prototypes and MVPs.

- **Materials and Supplies:** Costs for materials, software, and supplies directly related to the development of the prototype or MVP. This includes consumables, components, and raw materials necessary for both prototyping and the initial stages of manufacturing.
- **Prototyping Costs:** Expenses for prototyping services, including 3D printing, machining, or other fabrication services necessary for creating a physical or digital prototype. Costs associated with small-scale production runs for the purpose of prototyping are also covered.
- **Technical Services:** Fees for technical services such as programming, engineering, design, or consulting services that are essential for developing the prototype or advancing the technology.
- **IP Development and Protection:** Costs associated with filing for patents, copyright registration, or other forms of intellectual property protection for technologies developed within the scope of the fund.
- **Labor Costs:** Salaries or stipends for students or employees who are directly involved in the project, provided they are in compliance with the program guidelines and university policies.
- **Software and Licensing Fees:** Costs for software tools, platforms, or licenses that are necessary for the development or testing of the prototype or technology. This includes software essential for design, simulation, and manufacturing process planning.
- **Market Analysis and Validation:** Expenses related to conducting market research, user (beta) testing, or validation studies to support the commercial potential of the technology or product. It is important to note that this category is for the purpose of customer validation only. The fund does not cover travel or expenses related to customer discovery. Activities should focus on validating the market interest and feasibility post-customer discovery.