

# INNOVATION IN EDUCATION AWARDS

## Request for Proposals 2024-2025

Submission Deadline: Friday, February 16, 2024

### OBJECTIVES

In support of the Plan for Pitt and its continued goal of advancing academic excellence at the University of Pittsburgh, the Provost's Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence (ACIE) again invites proposals from University faculty for projects to enhance teaching by fostering new instructional approaches, techniques, or activities that represent advances over existing methods to promote and support student learning. We encourage proposals from all schools and disciplines, and from a wide range of perspectives, approaches, and ideas. While we aim to provide flexibility for applicants, we offer the following as examples of broad thematic areas to consider in framing the direction of applications.

Examples of broad thematic area to consider:

- Promoting and supporting student skill development in critical thinking, communication, leadership, data analysis, intercultural and global competency, collaboration, or teamwork
- Expanding interdisciplinary learning opportunities
- Optimizing technology - both hardware and software applications - to enhance learning.
- Broadening academic opportunities for new or nontraditional student populations or in nontraditional settings
- Enhancing belonging, equitable access, and learning outcomes for all students
- Discipline-based projects and learning

Specific areas of interest for this year's proposals. Beyond these broad thematic areas, this year's call strongly encourages faculty to explore ideas that focus on:

- The application of generative AI (Artificial Intelligence) to support student learning or assessment of learning
- Innovative approaches to the facilitation of **meaningful** dialogue and discourse
- Student well-being, including emotional, mental, and physical well-being
- Experiential learning
- Student engagement, especially in high enrollment courses (however your discipline defines high enrollment)

**Proposals should focus on teaching innovations in undergraduate or graduate-level courses. These grants are NOT intended to support innovations in professional training (e.g. for medical residents) or in continuing education.**

A summary of previous years' awards is provided on the ACIE website at <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/acie/awards/funded-projects>. Examples of a range of previously funded proposals are also available for review. Please contact [faculty@pitt.edu](mailto:faculty@pitt.edu) to acquire past copies of proposals.

**Note:** Prior to submission, the Council **strongly encourages** applicants to contact the University Center for Teaching and Learning ([www.teaching.pitt.edu](http://www.teaching.pitt.edu)) for consultation regarding the development and feasibility of their proposals. Please send a message to [teaching@pitt.edu](mailto:teaching@pitt.edu) to

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make an appointment with a teaching consultant for an initial project consultation.

### ELIGIBILITY

All full- and part-time faculty members at all University of Pittsburgh campuses can submit proposals or resubmit revised proposals that were not funded in the past. Please contact [faculty@pitt.edu](mailto:faculty@pitt.edu) with any questions.

### FORMAT

All proposals must be submitted to through [InfoReady Review](https://upitt.infoready4.com/), (<https://upitt.infoready4.com/>), where applicants can upload each of the following seven sections of the application.

#### 1. Cover Sheet, including:

- Project Title
- Name and signature of the corresponding (for contact and budget responsibility) Project Director with school/department affiliation, complete campus address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address
- Name and signature of Project Director's department chair (or dean in non-departmental schools)
- Project Duration (maximum period: **May 1, 2024–April 30, 2025**)
- Total funds requested

#### 2. Executive Summary

This one-page summary should address each of the required project components (see below 4.A.–E.) so that the reviewers will have an overview of the entire proposal.

#### 3. Key Project Personnel and Role in Project

Half-page maximum for key project personnel, such as the project director, co-director(s), contributing faculty, etc.; include a brief biographical sketch, and describe their qualifications to undertake the project and the responsibilities each contributor will undertake or oversee.

#### 4. Body of the Proposal

The body of the proposal should not exceed five single-spaced pages in length (exclusive of figures, tables, and references), employing a 12-point font size and one-inch margins. Required sections are:

- A. A clear **statement of the goal(s)** and **rationale** of the proposed project.
- B. A clear **description of the project**.

The Council recognizes that innovation varies by discipline, particularly in technology-enhancing classes. Please keep in mind that you are writing a proposal that will be reviewed by faculty representing a cross section of university faculties and disciplines. Proposals should be jargon-free and responsive to the objectives identified on page 1. As part of the description, include explicit statements on how the proposed project represents an innovative (i.e., new) approach or

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method of teaching, and how it differs from existing approaches or methods.

The review committee will look for evidence that the proposal reflects sound instructional design. This can be accomplished by consulting with a variety of university resource groups (see Note, page 1) or might be conveyed by discussing the instructional qualifications of project team members.

- C. Clear indications of the **potential impact on the teaching** mission of the University (e.g., number of students affected, contributions to the curriculum, the department, and the greater University community). Often, proposals can be justified by citing potential effects beyond a single instructor's course, but this cannot be given much weight by the review committee unless evidence is provided that additional instructors, either from the same or different departments, have been included in the process. In this connection, a letter, or letters of support from deans, department chairs, or instructors in potentially affected units could be provided to strengthen the case.
- D. A clear and explicit **statement on the project's sustainability** beyond the funding period. If the proposal's budget includes a need for operating expenses, be sure to explain how these operating costs will be covered in future years.
- E. An indication of how the effects of the teaching innovation will be evaluated. Provide a clear description of the **assessment methods and procedures** to be used to determine whether the project will result in a positive outcome, what those specific measured outcomes will be, and, to the extent relevant and feasible, any experimental procedures that will be used to confirm the validity of the conclusions regarding outcomes. Among the previously funded projects, some have employed established measurement techniques, while others have been developmental in nature.

### 5. Budget and Budget Justification

- a. Prepare a budget for the proposed project using the form included in the *Guidelines or Other Supporting Documents* section of this application. Also provide a separate statement justifying each line item in the proposed budget. Statements of departmental/school matching salary contributions are encouraged.
- b. Acceptable budget items include but are not limited to:
  - i. Purchase of supplies and equipment deemed crucial for the project and unavailable from school, departmental, or other University sources (and provide a rationale for these proposed purchases)
  - ii. Purchases or costs for development of new instructional resources
  - iii. Student assistants for course development (including fringe benefits charges as applicable)
  - iv. Cost of assistance from campus support units.
  - v. Student (including fringe benefits charges as applicable) or professional assistance for coordination/production of course Web sites
  - vi. Travel to acquire necessary project resources or to obtain training
  - vii. Project-related consultant costs (please note that for Pitt faculty and staff,

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external consulting rates cannot be charged to these projects)  
viii. One month of summer salary (fringe benefits charges must be included), to be paid as direct compensation for those on 8- to 10-month base salaries and to cover release time for those on 12-month base salaries.

- c. Unacceptable budget items include the following:
- i. Travel and maintenance costs for participation at professional meetings
  - ii. Subscriptions and professional journal costs
  - iii. Editorial assistance
  - iv. Release time (maximum 1 month), except for faculty on 12-month base salaries

### 6. Required Letter(s) of Support

A letter(s) of support for the proposal from the Project Directors' (and co-directors, as appropriate) department chair (or dean in non-departmental schools) is required for submission.

### 7. Appendices

Appendices can be submitted for references, figures and tables, and appropriate syllabi, and may include additional letters of support (see 4.C, page 3).

## UNIVERSITY COPYRIGHT POLICY

Any copyrightable materials created by faculty, staff, or students because of this University-funded project will be owned by the University, subject to a royalty-sharing agreement with the creator. For specific information, please refer to [University of Pittsburgh Intellectual Property Policy, Policy RI 10 \(04-05-21\)](#).

## PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals will be reviewed by the members of the Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence, with the Council retaining the option for sending proposals out for review by relevant colleagues where needed. Review criteria will include:

- Congruence between the goals of the grants program and those of the proposal
- The projected likelihood for success
- Perceived potential impact on students, the curriculum, the department, and the academic community

Final recommendations to the provost will be based on a thorough Council discussion. Preference will be given to projects/project directors not funded previously under this program.

## EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUSLY FUNDED PROJECTS

A summary of previous years' awards is provided on the ACIE website at <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/acie/awards/funded-projects>. Examples of a range of previously funded proposals are also available for review. Please contact [faculty@pitt.edu](mailto:faculty@pitt.edu) to acquire past copies of proposals.

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### SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND NOTIFICATION OF AWARDS

Proposals must be submitted to the Innovation in Education Award Application in [InfoReady Review](#), by Friday, February 16, 2024. Please direct questions about the submission process to [faculty@pitt.edu](mailto:faculty@pitt.edu). We anticipate making notifications of awards by early April 2024.

### NUMBER, SIZE, AND DURATION OF AWARDS

The Council anticipates the awarding of a mixture of grants of varying sizes (usually ranging from \$3,500 to \$12,500). Larger awards (between approximately \$12,500 and \$25,000) will be considered for truly exceptional proposals of sufficient scale or scope as to merit such support. The award period will cover projects undertaken between May 1, 2024, and April 30, 2025.

### FEEDBACK

Applicants will be notified via e-mail of the results of the review process.

### REPORTING

Successful applicants must report on the project's outcome(s), particularly in reference to the criteria for success established in the proposal. Additional guidelines for reporting will be provided to funded project directors. The summary report will be due in the Provost's Office on **June 30, 2025**.