

The Provost's Award for Experiential Learning and Impact, 2027

The Provost's Award for Experiential Learning and Impact annually recognizes outstanding achievement in the design, implementation, and assessment of experiential learning opportunities that support students in making meaningful impacts on themselves, their professions, and their communities. Up to five recipients may be selected annually, with each receiving a \$2,500 cash prize.

Eligibility

- Open to full-time and part-time faculty at any University of Pittsburgh campus.
- Open to undergraduate and graduate courses and curricula.

At the University of Pittsburgh, experiential learning is defined as an intentionally designed educational process in which learners engage in activities which are connected to real-world contexts. Through collaboration with others, students engage in structured guidance and feedback, critical reflection, and integrate theory with practice to develop new knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values in ways that are rigorous, meaningful, and transferable.

Experiential learning can create impact across personal, professional, and public contexts. Award applicants should demonstrate the impact of their experience. Defined by intentional design rather than location or modality (F2F, Online, Hybrid), experiential learning may occur within or beyond the classroom. Experiential learning opportunities being considered for this award may take many forms including but not limited to:

- Service Learning
- Community Engagement
- Internships and Practicum Experiences
- Cooperative Education (Co-ops)
- Undergraduate or Graduate Research
- Field Work
- Study Abroad and Global Experiences
- Applied Capstone Projects
- Making and Creative Activities (e.g., 3D models, laser engravings, VR software, 360-degree videos, textiles, text, performance, etc.)

Nomination and Submission Guidelines

Nomination Deadline: October 16, 2026.

This award uses a two-stage process: a nomination stage, followed by a full application stage submitted only by nominees who have been reviewed and invited to apply.

Stage 1: Nomination

Written nominations may be made by any individual - faculty, staff, students, or alumni who have evidence of the nominee's excellence in creating impactful experiential learning. Letters of nomination should be no more than one page and should provide evidence of the nominee's effectiveness through specific examples, such as ways the nominee:

- designs experiential learning that clearly integrates theory with hands-on, real-world engagement;
- intentionally embeds learning outcomes and assessment within the curriculum;
- fosters meaningful growth in students' skills, confidence, or sense of belonging;
- creates experiences that meaningfully benefit communities, organizations, or society beyond the classroom; and
- engages students in structured reflection connecting experience to theory.

The letter should indicate the nominator's name, email address, phone number, and relationship to the nominee (e.g., faculty colleague, student, Teaching Center staff member, department chair, dean, community partner etc.).

Email awards nominations to Kaylee Stoneburner KNS159@pitt.edu

Stage 2: Application

Eligible faculty nominated for this award will be invited to submit a dossier.

Applications will be evaluated based on four aspects that address experiential learning and impact.

1. Experience

Demonstrates a strong balance between theoretical understanding and practical application.

Activities clearly integrate underlying concepts with authentic, hands-on learning and engagement.

Involves active skill development and engagement beyond observation, requiring students to directly apply knowledge to real-world challenges.

2. Reflection

Reflection is thoughtful and critical, examining the experience from multiple angles rather than simply describing what happened.

Reflection clearly connects the experience to underlying concepts, frameworks, or disciplinary knowledge, deepening students' understanding of why the experience mattered.

3. Curricular Alignment

Clearly defines learning outcomes and competencies tied to the experiential learning activities.

Embeds experiential components intentionally within the curriculum to connect concepts to practice.

Ensures students have equitable access to the experience, along with a shared understanding of what success looks like.

Employs appropriate assessment methods to demonstrate student learning.

4. Demonstrating Impact

Distinguish effort from impact. Hours served, activities completed, or tasks performed are not, by themselves, evidence of impact.

Forms of Impact

Experiential learning can create impact in overlapping ways with personal, professional and public impacts. Applicants can discuss whichever form (or forms) best reflects their experience.

Personal and Professional Impact

This describes experiential learning experiences that affect students personally and/or professionally. These experiences may lead to changes in their knowledge and learning, personal or professional growth, sense of belonging, identity, or sense of purpose, etc. Ground the claim in specific examples from the student's own experience and perspective that demonstrate how and why the change occurred.

Public Impact

This describes experiential learning experiences that create direct, intentional benefits for communities, organizations, or other external partners. Examples should demonstrate how students address real-world challenges, support external partners, contribute to community well-being, or create knowledge, products, or services with public value. Ground the claim in specific examples from the perspective of partners or other beneficiaries that demonstrate the resulting benefit or change.

Completed applications are due by December 7, 2026.

Dossier of Materials via InfoReady.

1. **Narrative:** Submit a narrative of no more than three (3) pages addressing the four criteria discussed above: Experience, Reflection, Curricular Alignment, Demonstrating Impact.
2. **Experiential Learning Artifacts:** Submit up to three (3) artifacts evidencing the design of the experience, such as assignment prompts, reflection protocols, assessment rubrics, or examples of student-produced work.
3. **Letters of Support:** Submit up to two (2) letters from any of the following: Dean, Department Chair, Associate/Assistant Dean, Faculty colleague etc.
4. **Evidence of Impact:** Applicants should attach letters based on whichever form (or forms) best reflect their experience.
 - **Personal and Professional:** If you are primarily demonstrating personal and professional impact. Submit up to two (2) student letters that identify the specific competency or change that developed (e.g., confidence, professional identity, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, belonging etc.) and show what students were able to do, demonstrate, or understand as a result.
 - **Public Impact:** If you are primarily demonstrating public impact submit up to two (2) letters from the specific beneficiary a partner, organization, or community describing what changed for them because of the work, written from that beneficiary's own perspective.

Dates

- Nominations due on Oct 16^h, 2026 via email to Kaylee Stoneburner KNS159@pitt.edu
- Completed applications are due by December 7, 2026. Please submit all materials electronically via InfoReady.

For questions regarding the award please contact Sera Mathew (sam627@pitt.edu)