OBJECTIVES

In support of the Plan for Pitt 2028 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 areas to consider:

- Promoting and supporting student skill development in critical thinking, information literacy, communication, leadership, data analysis, intercultural and global competency, collaboration, or teamwork
- Optimizing technology - both hardware and software applications - to enhance learning
- Broadening academic opportunities for new or nontraditional student populations or in nontraditional settings
- Expanding interdisciplinary learning opportunities
- Enhancing belonging, equitable access, and learning outcomes for all students
- Discipline-based projects and learning
- Innovative approaches for students to participate in community-engaged learning (e.g., service-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 technologies, including generative AI, to support or enhance student learning or assessment of learning
- Creative approaches to support and facilitate constructive and meaningful dialogue and discourse across differences (including personal, demographic, and disciplinary/professional) among students
- [Experiential learning](), encouraging hands-on, immersive, reflective experiences in and outside of traditional classroom setting
- Student engagement, especially in challenging learning environments, includes but is not limited to, high-enrollment courses and asynchronous courses.

> **Proposals should focus on teaching innovations in undergraduate or graduate-level courses. These grants are NOT intended to support innovations in post-graduate training (e.g., for health sciences residents) or continuing education. Preference will be given to projects/project directors not previously under this program.**

Innovation in Education Awards
Request for Proposals 2025-2026
Submissions due: **11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16, 2025**

A summary of previous years' awards is provided on the ACIE [website](). Examples of a range of previously funded proposals are also available for review. Please contact [faculty@pitt.edu]() to acquire past copies of proposals.

Note, before submission: Because the Teaching Center reviews all applications for pedagogical and educational technology feasibility, the Council **strongly encourages** applicants to contact the University Center for Teaching and Learning for [consultation]() regarding the development of their proposals. Contact [teaching@pitt.edu]() with any questions or concerns.

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]() with any questions.

FORMAT
All proposals must be submitted through ([InfoReady Review]()), where applicants can upload the following seven application sections.

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, 2025–April 30, 2026**
   - Total funds requested

2. **Executive Summary**
   This one-page summary should address each of the required project components (see below 4.A.–E.) so the reviewers will have an overview of the 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 be at most 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 proposed project's **goal(s) and rationale**.

   B. A clear **description of the project**.

The Council recognizes that innovation varies by discipline, particularly in technology-enhancing classes. Please remember 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 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 University's teaching mission** (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. Still, the review committee cannot give this much weight unless evidence is provided that additional instructors 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. Some previously funded projects have employed established measurement techniques, while others have been developmental.

5. **Budget and Budget Justification**
   The Council plans to award varying grants, typically between $3,500 and $12,500. However, *exceptional* proposals with significant scale or scope that justify the additional support may be considered for larger awards of approximately $12,500 to $25,000.

   a. Prepare a budget for the proposed project using the form included in the application's *Guidelines or Other Supporting Documents* section. 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 may 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 the 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, 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. The following budget items are **not** acceptable:

      i. Travel and maintenance costs for participation in 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

The proposal must be supported by a letter(s) from the project director's (and co-directors, as appropriate) department chair (or dean in non-departmental schools).

7. Appendices

Appendices can be submitted for references, figures, tables, and appropriate syllabi. They may also 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. Please refer to the [University of Pittsburgh Intellectual Property Policy](#), [Policy RI 10 (04-05-21) for specific information](#).

PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

All proposals will be reviewed by the Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence members, with the Council retaining the option to send 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 to acquire past copies of proposals.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE AND NOTIFICATION OF AWARDS

Proposals must be submitted to the Innovation in Education Award Application by **11:59 p.m. on Sunday, February 16, 2025**. Please direct questions about the submission process to faculty@pitt.edu. We anticipate making notifications of awards in **early April 2025**.

NUMBER, SIZE, AND DURATION OF AWARDS

The Council plans to award various grants, usually between $3,500 and $12,500. However, *exceptional* proposals award proposals of significant scale or scope that justify the additional may be considered for larger awards of approximately $12,500 to $25,000t. The award period will cover projects undertaken between May 1, 2025, and April 30, 2026.

NOTIFICATION

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 on the success criteria established in the proposal. Funded project directors will receive additional reporting guidelines. The summary report will be due in the Office of the Provost on **June 30, 2026**.