

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Morgan Center

Teaching Innovation Grants 2025 Course and Program Projects Guidelines and Application

This grant mechanism is intended for applicants, either individuals or groups, whose project is intended for department or program-level impact rather than campus-wide impact, or for those who cannot or do not wish to commit to the scope or regular interaction of a PLC. In general, these grants aim to promote innovative, evidence-based pedagogy and curricula that enhance student learning, provide seed money for pilot projects that will strengthen proposals for external funding, support evaluation of ongoing or proposed innovations aimed at publication, and support professional development or external partnerships related to teaching and learning. In addition, grants may assist faculty in designing their instructional approaches using technology to achieve enhanced learning, take advantage of efficiencies that can be realized by using emerging technologies for teaching, and evaluate the impact of new instructional approaches.

Please note that this grant mechanism supports *existing* programs and courses; we do not support the development of experimental courses or new programs that have not yet been approved by faculty governance processes. However, these grants can support the development of learning experiences in newly *approved* programs, especially if they have novel elements or potential for broad impact. This program also does not fund routine updating or renewal of courses, curricula, or teaching methods.

These grants are administered by the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center using the Educational Development Council operating budget, funds from the Morgan endowment, and funds from the Academic Technology Center. Proposals are reviewed by members of the Educational Development Council and representatives of the Academic Technology Center.

A. Eligibility

All WPI faculty members are eligible and welcome to apply, including dual-mission and teaching-mission tenure-track and tenured faculty, teaching- and research-track (TRT) faculty, and adjunct faculty. Staff members with educational roles are eligible to apply.

Current members of the Educational Development Council are not eligible to apply.

B. Funding Levels, Allowable Costs, and Instructions for Budget Justification

Applicants propose their own budget. Awards have usually ranged from \$3,000 to \$10,000

in recent years. Evidence of cost-sharing from the program or department, or other sources, often strengthens a proposal but is not essential. Following are instructions about allowable costs and budget justification:

Faculty compensation. Faculty compensation is appropriate only for those who have less than 12-month appointments and for activity that extends beyond normal expectations for teaching renewal and improvement; applicants are advised to address this latter point in their budget justification. Faculty compensation may be used either for summer support or academic year release time (pending department head approval). Compensation is granted as a lump-sum payment in monthly payroll such that benefits will not be charged.

Per HR/labor guidelines, exempt professional staff with 12-month appointments may not receive additional compensation. Staff who wish to apply for an IP grant should discuss with their supervisor how the project aligns with their work responsibilities or unit goals and the extent to which other work activities would need to be adjusted during the grant period. In other words, the work of the grant should not be an unpaid overload or negatively affect other responsibilities.

Student wages. Applicants are encouraged to include undergraduate or graduate students in the project activities whenever appropriate. The budget justification must describe the student(s)' responsibilities, specify the hourly wage, and estimate the number of hours. The state hourly minimum wage is the minimum for undergraduate students (\$15.50), however, please consider offering a more competitive wage for these students. Wages for graduate students are typically \$20/hr., but a more competitive wage is always appropriate. Student tuition cannot be supported by this grant program.

Fees for an assessment or evaluation consultant. Working with an evaluation consultant is encouraged, as early as the proposal development stage. The quality of evaluation plans is considered during the review. To inquire about the availability of in-house evaluation or to ask further questions, please contact the Morgan Center's Senior Research and Evaluation Associate, Kimberly LeChasseur, by completing [this form](#).

Supplies, software, and equipment. Software or equipment necessary for enabling a novel pedagogical experiment or pilot project that will be assessed is suitable for funding. *This grants program does not provide funding to scale desired software or equipment access for students or to bolster new programs, since that type of support normally should come from department capital or IT budgets.*

Travel and professional development related to the project. General transfer of funds to Professional Development Accounts, for either professional staff or faculty, is not allowed, but specific professional development activities will be supported. Explain how a specific conference, workshop, or other type of professional development experience will enable or enrich the proposed work, and estimate expenses including registration, travel, lodging, and food.

Other types of costs may well be appropriate to a particular project. Please consult Jessi Hill if you have questions.

C. How to Prepare a Strong Proposal

Proposals must contain the following:

1. **Cover Page and Budget with Justification** (see forms appended to this document)
2. **Project Description:** This narrative should not exceed three single-spaced typewritten pages with 11-point or larger font. Use of the following headings is required. The narrative should discuss:
 - (a) ***Need for the project:*** What is the problem or opportunity being addressed? Please situate this problem or opportunity within the relevant disciplinary context(s): what unique contribution would this project make to higher education beyond your teaching growth and course or project development/improvement? Successful proposals are expected to have the potential to impact WPI widely and/or influence those teaching in your discipline elsewhere.
 - (b) ***Goals and Objectives:*** Clearly identify the anticipated project objectives.
 - (c) ***Approach:*** Describe the methods, procedures, and/or activities that will be used to accomplish the stated goals and objectives. How do we know that these are best practices that are likely to achieve the stated goals and objectives? What are the innovative elements of your approach? If the objective of your project is to produce teaching materials, how do we know that they're not already available elsewhere? And how will you increase the likelihood that the materials will be adopted/adapted by others?
 - (d) ***Deliverables and Impact:*** What will the project produce? What will success look like if you reach your goals and objectives? Describe a plan for examining project outputs and outcomes and a plan for sharing your success with relevant stakeholders. Also describe how you plan to leverage this project for future work (e.g., the next phase of development, implementation in new courses and/or by colleagues, future funding proposals).
 - (e). ***Project timeline: Projects*** should begin no earlier than May 2025. Projects funded by this mechanism generally take 12-18 months to complete. If you are planning a larger, multi-year project, please propose a part or phase of that project that fits a shorter period; you may describe it as a pilot project, development phase, etc. and argue why this would allow you to achieve larger goals in the long-term.

Some prior successful Independent Project proposals can be found in this OneDrive location: [Teaching Innovation Grant Proposal Examples](#).

The proposal deadline is February 3, 2025. Proposals should be sent as an email attachment to morgan-center@wpi.edu and should consist of a single pdf document ([pdf portfolios](#) are acceptable) and must include all required elements.

Department head endorsement: The PI for CPP proposals should discuss their proposal with their department head or program director so that department heads are aware of their teaching innovation goals and interests and potential time commitment. Department heads or program directors are then asked to submit this very [brief support form](#) by February 10, 2025.

Review criteria: The review committee will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria: 1) the degree to which the project addresses a compelling need or opportunity; 2) the educational soundness of the approach (including plans for assessment or evaluation) and the likelihood of success; 3) potential scope of impact; 4) presence of innovative and distinctive elements; and 5) cost-effectiveness. Applicants will be notified in D term regardless of whether their proposal has been accepted.

D. Reporting Requirements and Grant Conditions

- Grantees are responsible for consulting with WPI's [Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#) to determine if the project involves human subjects and constitutes [exempt](#) or non-exempt activity.
- The PI is responsible for budget oversight and must approve any disbursement of funds. All funds unexpended by the deadline reporting date will be returned to the EDC or IT Division for redistribution the following year. Extensions must be requested in writing.
- At the conclusion of the funded project, the PI must submit a brief written report that documents the outcomes of the project. Failure to do this will lessen the likelihood of future funding from the EDC.

E. Contacts

Prospective applicants for Independent Projects grants are invited to contact any faculty member of the EDC (Mike Buckholt, Jeanine Dudle, Jessi Hill, Geoff Pfeifer) or ATC staff (Kate Beverage, Caitlin Neer) with questions before submission, related to the aims and scope of the project or budget questions. With sufficient advance notice, Jessi Hill ([Booking App](#)) and Kate Beverage (kwrigley@wpi.edu) may be able to provide feedback on proposal drafts. To inquire about the availability of our in-house evaluator or to discuss objectives and assessment methods, please contact the Morgan Center's Senior Research and Evaluation Associate, Kimberly LeChasseur, by completing [this form](#).

Please list all applicants, with PI listed first. The PI will be the primary contact and will be responsible for budget oversight if the grant is awarded.

Name	Job Title	Department/Program/Office
PI:		

Title of Proposal:

Brief Proposal Description (maximum of 80 words, for publicity purposes). Please include goal and potential impact.

Course(s) or Projects Affected:

Approximate Number of Students Affected Annually:

TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST: \$

Start Date:

End Date (when final report will be submitted):

CERTIFICATION

I agree to abide by the grant conditions in the program guidelines if an award is made.

Signature(s) of Applicant(s): (typed signature is acceptable)	Date

DEPARTMENT HEAD / PROGRAM DIRECTOR ENDORSEMENT is required. Please ask them to submit this [brief support form](#) by February 10, 2024. Simply copy and paste the link to the form into the email and send it to your department head.

Budget Details and Justification

Student support (specify hourly wage, estimated hours, time period, and activities). Consider \$15.50/hr. for undergraduates and \$20/hr. for graduate students, depending on required skill set and time of year. \$

Explanation and justification:

Faculty compensation (specify individuals, time period, and activities) \$

Explanation and justification:

Travel and/or professional development activities \$

Explanation and justification:

Supplies, software, equipment (itemize and explain why department capital or IT budgets are not an appropriate source of funding) \$

Explanation and justification:

Assessment/evaluation support \$

Explanation and justification:

Other costs (itemize) \$

Explanation and justification:

TOTAL =

\$

Project Description: This narrative should not exceed three single-spaced typewritten pages with 11 point or larger font. Use of the following headings is required. *For guidance on each of these sections of the proposal, see C. How to Prepare a Strong Proposal, on p. 2 of this document.*

Need for the project

Goals and objectives

Approach

Deliverables and Impact

Project timeline