

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS 2011/2012 UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO LEARNING INITIATIVES FUND (LIF) GRANT

The University of Waterloo is committed to enhancing the quality of our student learning experience and continuing our history of innovative approaches to teaching and learning. We invite all University of Waterloo faculty and staff to submit proposals for a LEARNING INITIATIVES FUND (LIF) GRANT in pursuit of these goals. LIF grants support inquiry into undergraduate or graduate teaching and learning at the course level.

LIF funding is available for research projects that support the teaching and learning elements from the strategic plans of the academic unit and/or the University of Waterloo, and is available over a two year period. The focus of the LIF is to assist you in your efforts to collect evidence surrounding the impact(s) of an instructional initiative or new learning resource. In particular, we are interested in projects that enhance student learning processes and outcomes.

Proposals due: **May 30, 2011**
Results announced: **June 30, 2011**
Project funding available: **July 29, 2011**

There are three levels of project funding: up to \$5,000, up to \$10,000, and up to \$15,000.

Successful projects will show promise of assessing the development of best practices in teaching and learning with results that may be used by other disciplines, departments, faculties, and institutions. Priority will be given to proposals - from teams or individual researchers - that most closely adhere to these guidelines.

Note: If your research project proposal relates more strongly to program development or renewal, we invite you to submit a proposal and application for a PROGRAM INITIATIVES FUND (PIF) GRANT. These grants are designed to support and enhance teaching practices and enrich student learning outcomes in undergraduate and graduate programs, focussing on program level initiatives.

Sample of approved projects from past years

Please see the list of successful projects, applicants, and abstracts from past years' competitions at http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching_awards_and_grants/LIF/LIF_current.html. Sample proposals are also available for viewing at the Centre for Teaching Excellence – please contact Nicola Simmons at nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca or Shirley Hall at s8hall@uwaterloo.ca for assistance or to arrange an appointment.

LIF Grant Proposal Application Submission Process

Applications (up to 12 pages maximum) must contain the following elements:

1. **Cover page** (1 page maximum) including the following information:
 - Project title
 - Principal Investigator (PI) name, contact information and affiliation (faculty/department)
 - Team member name(s), contact information and affiliation (for each)
 - Chair/Director endorsement: A statement that the Chair/Director is aware of your grant proposal
2. **Abstract** (250 words/1 page)
 - Clearly stated research question
 - Overview of research process

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- Connection to existing literature
 - Anticipated new knowledge about improving student learning
3. **Goals of the Project** (1 page maximum)
- A rationale that describes the anticipated changes in learning processes and outcomes
 - The research objectives as related to teaching and learning
 - The proposed teaching/learning activities
 - How these will be assessed
4. **Literature Review** (2 - 3 pages)
- Annotated review of several articles or other sources
 - Overview of related initiatives at other institutions or in other disciplines, if any
 - *We strongly advise seeking the advice of your liaison librarian with this part of the proposal*
5. **Research design and methods** (1-2 pages)
- Outline the processes for the research, including methods of data collection
6. **Evaluation of Results** (1/2 to 1 page)
- State how data will be analyzed, and how project outcomes will be assessed
7. **Budget** (1 page)
- Eligible Costs
- Graduate and/or undergraduate research assistance (allow salary plus 14% benefits)
 - Registration and travel costs for relevant conference presentations (up to 10% of total budget)
 - Incentives for students to participate in research (such as questionnaires, surveys)
- Ineligible Costs
- New course development
 - Salaries related to course instruction
 - Ongoing professional supports, such as computer hardware, journal subscriptions, society memberships
 - Equipment and furnishings
8. **Timelines** (1 page)
- Indicates when each phase of study will occur, including ethics review
9. **Plan for dissemination** (1 page)
- How findings will be shared with the UW community and beyond. List specific journals and conferences

Submission package

Proposals should be formatted in Microsoft Word according to the following guidelines:

- Times New Roman Font - 12 point
- 2.5 cm margins
- Double-spaced
- Pages numbered
- Author identifiers to be on cover page only
- Please do not exceed the page maximums – proposals with extra pages will not be eligible for consideration

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The Office of Research Ethics (<http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/>) (ORE) Form 101 must be completed by the Principal Investigator and submitted to Susanne Santi, Senior Manager, Office of Research Ethics (ORE) (ssanti@uwaterloo.ca) and approved **prior to data collection**.

LIF GRANT Committee Review Process

Proposals will be assessed by a review committee chaired by the Associate Vice President Academic. The committee will be composed of three members, none of whom are applicants for this round of LIF grants. The committee members will comprise one staff member from the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and two faculty members from the Teaching-Based Research Group (T-BRG). The Research and Evaluation Consultant will act as a non-voting advisor to the committee.

The review committee will make their decision(s) based on the how closely the proposal adheres to the following criteria:

1. **Adherence to the Submission Requirements:** Does the submission include all elements listed under the LIF Grant Proposal Application Submission process?
2. **Clear Objectives:** Does the proposal clearly state the research question, purpose, define realistic and achievable objectives, and identify an important teaching/learning problem or issue?
3. **Connections to Literature:** Does the proposal provide a succinct review of relevant literature, indicating how this project will contribute to or expand upon that literature?
4. **Appropriate Methods:** Are the research methods appropriate for the problem/issue being investigated?
5. **Appropriate Evaluation:** Are the evaluation methods appropriate for the problem/issue being investigated?
6. **Feasibility:** Do the project timeline and budget seem achievable given the problem/issue being investigated?
7. **Impact and Transferability:** Is there a clear benefit regarding enhancing learning and teaching in a particular course or program? Beyond that program?
8. **Appropriate Sharing:** Are there clearly articulated plans for appropriate sharing of the outcomes of the project with others at UW and beyond?

Project Duration and Completion Requirements

Projects must be completed within two years. A project update listing publications and presentations will be required at the end of the first year (July 29, 2012). Failure to provide the update in a timely manner may result in withdrawal of remaining research funds. A Project Completion Form (listing publications and presentations) is required at the end of the two year period (July 29, 2013). Any requests for changes to the submitted budget (for example, ways in which funds are spent) must be submitted prior to such expenditures.

In addition, successful applicants will be requested to share the results of their work by any or all of:

- Publicly presenting their work to interested members of the University of Waterloo community
- Presenting at a peer-reviewed conference (in their discipline, or at a suitable post-secondary education conference such as the Opportunities and New Directions conference)
- Publishing their work in a discipline-based journal or in a suitable post-secondary education journal

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For assistance with proposal development as well as developing the research plan for your project, applicants are strongly advised to contact Dr. Nicola Simmons, Research and Evaluation Consultant at the Centre for Teaching Excellence, nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca or extension 32940, or Shirley Hall, Research Associate for the Centre for Teaching Excellence, s8hall@uwaterloo.ca, or extension 31240.

We have learned from past applicants who have gone through the application process that attending one of our workshops saves time (and we realize how busy you are!) and helps applicants avoid potential frustration. We therefore strongly encourage you to attend one of our sessions. The workshops are designed to guide you through the application process. Please contact Nicola Simmons or Shirley Hall to sign up!

LIF PIF Grant workshops (for hands-on support getting the proposal written)

Tuesday, March 29, 9 – 11 a.m. pm FLEX lab

Thursday, April 14, 12:30 – 3:30 pm FLEX lab

Tuesday May 3, 12:30 – 3:30 pm FLEX lab

Tuesday May 10, 12:30 – 3:30 pm FLEX lab

Of course we encourage you to ask us any questions about the grant application process or format at anytime, so please feel free to contact Nicola Simmons or Shirley Hall and we will be happy to assist you!

Application Submission Checklist

Please provide **SIX HARD COPIES** and **ONE ELECTRONIC COPY*** of **EACH** application. Each application should be stapled and clearly marked **LIF Grant Proposal 2011/2012**.

Please submit completed applications to:

Dr. Nicola Simmons

Research and Evaluation Consultant, Centre for Teaching Excellence

Dana Porter Library, Office #328

(519) 888-4567, extension 32940

*Please submit your **electronic copy** in Microsoft Word to nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca.

Please use the following format for the subject line of your email:

LIF Grant Proposal, last name of the principal investigator, year.

For example: "LIF Grant Proposal Smith 2011"