

Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement (LITE) Grant Guidelines

Seed Grants

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Information about LITE Grants

Purpose

The purpose of University of Waterloo's LITE grants is to provide support for investigating student learning and alternative approaches to teaching and assessing student learning at the individual, departmental, Faculty, or institutional levels. The overall aims are to foster deep student learning and promote curiosity, reflection, and exploration in the areas of teaching and learning. LITE grant projects must contribute to these aims. The program consists of two types of grants: LITE Seed Grants and LITE Full Grants.

Description

The intent of the Seed Grants is to support small-scale investigations and instructional development (teaching enhancement) activities. Proposals may focus on one or a combination of the following themes: 1) assessing new approaches to teaching and learning (what is possible and does it work?); 2) critically examining student learning with existing instructional approaches (what is happening and what could be improved?); and 3) pursuing instructional development opportunities (how could I teach differently to better facilitate deep student learning?).

Amount: up to \$7,500

Application deadlines: (3 annually): February 1st, June 1st, October 1st

Number of projects funded: Up to 6 per application deadline

Eligibility as principal applicant

- Tenured and tenure-track faculty members
- Lecturers
- Laboratory instructors and teaching staff
- Academic support staff
- Postdoctoral fellows (Important note: Postdoctoral fellows may apply as principal applicant for LITE Seed grants, but funds must be set up and remain in a collaborating faculty member's account.)

Notes on eligibility

- Please note that individuals with limited term appointments may apply. Appointments should cover the completion date of the grant, or the applicant should have as a collaborator someone with a continuing appointment. Please provide documentation confirming eligibility (e.g., copy of letter of appointment indicating that research is included in role). For further details regarding eligibility to conduct research of individuals with limited term appointments, please consult the [relevant guidelines on the Office of Research Ethics website](#).
- A person may hold only one active LITE grant at a time as principal applicant.
- Collaborations with people outside of the University of Waterloo are encouraged; however, the principal applicant must be from the University of Waterloo.

Ineligible expenses

- Funds requested for fully online course redevelopment, computer purchases, and basic infrastructure maintenance or replacement. Individuals should seek these funds through their department chair or Faculty dean.
- Funds requested mainly for subsidizing travel and related expenses for students enrolled in a course. Funds paid to students as research assistants are an exception.
- Funds to conduct an academic program review, or any similar initiative that normally would be expected for ongoing program development/improvement (e.g., co-curricular program evaluations).
- Salary for applicant(s)
- Teaching release and the development of standard course materials
- Software and electronic tools expenses exceeding \$400
- Conference registration and travel expenses exceeding \$2,000 (combined)
- Fees for publishing manuscripts in open access journals exceeding \$1,500. Fees for open access journals of \$1,500 or less are eligible, but applicants must provide a rationale for why the manuscript is being submitted to an open access journal. Please refer to the University of Waterloo Library's [Open Access Guide](#) for resources on publishing in open access journals. The Library also provides [resources on assessing journals](#) for credibility and impact. Applicants may check specific journals for the publishers' open access, copyright, and self-archiving policies using the [SHERPA/RoMEO](#) database.
- Regular teaching retreats
- Journal subscriptions and professional memberships
- Tuition fees for credit courses taken as part of an academic program – Please refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 4 "Benefits to Faculty and Staff Undertaking Part-time Educational Programs"](#)
- Honoraria for members of the University of Waterloo on-campus community (e.g., faculty members, staff members, etc.) who collaborate in the research
- Work for which a University of Waterloo unit is already budgeted support
- Services already funded at the University of Waterloo
- Salaries for research assistants at other institutions
- Funds for experts from elsewhere, when similar resources and expertise are available at the University of Waterloo

Sample ideas for using LITE Seed Grant funds

- Conduct a research-informed pilot investigation into the impact on student learning of a new or existing instructional method. Investigations of current practices would be done to establish baselines on current learning impact before investigating the impact of a new method. Such studies could serve as pilot studies for a LITE Full Grant proposal.
- Develop innovative courses, materials, or activities that promote the internationalization of curriculum, pedagogies, and student learning (for example, integrating study/co-op experience abroad into the curriculum; curricular initiatives that promote greater interaction among domestic and international students; transcultural programs and courses; teaching, assessing, and supervising international students). If you want to discuss a project idea related to internationalization, please contact [Svitlana Taraban-Gordon](#).
- Conduct investigations of pedagogical activities that support reflection on and integration of co-operative education and work-integrated learning experiences, or which examine the outcomes of co-operative education and work-integrated learning. If you would like to discuss a project idea related to these areas, please contact [Anne Fannon](#).
- Develop course materials or activities that promote the Indigenization of the curriculum and sharing of Indigenous knowledge or conduct investigations of pedagogical activities that promote these areas.
- Present pedagogical scholarship at a disciplinary or higher education teaching conference outside of the University of Waterloo.
- Invite a guest speaker or facilitator to work with a department, school, or Faculty to implement a different instructional approach and provide examples of methods for assessing learning (for example, peer instruction, case-based learning, problem-based learning).
- Attend a formal, recognized training session to learn how to use a new teaching method (for example, Problem-based Learning experience at McMaster, Facilitator Development Workshop for Instructional Skills Workshops, Harvard Case Method) – individuals or teams may apply.
- Coordinate an inaugural departmental, school-wide, or faculty-wide event focused on exchanging instructional innovations and best practices.
- Create innovative course designs or activities in which digital course materials, tools, or learning objects are part of the innovation. Note: Depending on the nature of the project, the Centre for Extended Learning (CEL) may be able to provide development support. You are encouraged to consult [Aldo Caputo](#) at CEL before submission to discuss project needs and timelines, to determine if the work can be accommodated with available resources and/or completed within the time allotted by the grant. If so, a development plan created in collaboration with CEL and confirmation of their assent should be included in your submission.

For descriptions of successfully funded projects, please visit the [LITE Grant website](#).

Ethical and research integrity considerations

- If your research involves human participants, please ensure that you have met the University's requirements for completing training (online tutorial) for the second edition of the [Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#).
- The Office of Research Ethics has developed detailed guidelines for [conducting research in classes or with students as study participants](#). Please consult these guidelines when designing your project and developing your proposal. Proposed incentives should be aligned with social science research practices and should not cause undue influence of participants' consent to participate in the research.
- For projects involving students in courses as participants, the research should be described in the course syllabus. The syllabus should also describe any course activities and what is expected of students. If applicable, credit for participating in an alternate activity should be described. For a list of items to include in the course syllabus, please consult the [guidelines on the Office of Research Ethics website](#). When applicable, it is recommended that a course syllabus, or a draft of the syllabus, be provided with the research ethics application.
- The Office of Research has developed guidelines for [research integrity](#), which includes information on breaches to research integrity, procedures for maintaining research-participant confidentiality, and available training and resources. The Tri-Agency Framework also provides guidelines for the [responsible conduct of research](#). Please consult these guidelines before beginning your project.
- If you are unsure about whether or not your project requires ethics clearance, please contact the [Office of Research Ethics](#).

How to apply

Important notes for your LITE Grant application

A **complete application** consists of:

- LITE Grant Cover Sheet*
- LITE Grant Proposal*
- LITE Grant Template*
- [Office of Research Cover Sheet for Sponsored Research](#)

*Please note you **must** use the [required application templates](#) for your application to be considered.

Required Consultation with CTE Research Staff

In order for your application to be considered, applicants are required to meet with [Annik Bolideau](#), Educational Developer – Research and Consulting at CTE (x41240) or [Brianna Bennett](#), Educational Research Associate at CTE (x47388) **within the first three weeks of the term. This meeting must occur, at the latest, 1 week prior to the submission deadline.** The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your project proposal and research plan and suggest ways to enhance the quality and clarity of the application.

Please contact [Annik Bolideau](#), Educational Developer – Research and Consulting (x41240) or [Brianna Bennett](#) Educational Research Associate (x47388) to schedule this meeting.

Completing the Office of Research cover sheet

Applicants must submit a completed electronic [Office of Research cover sheet](#) along with their LITE grant application. On this cover sheet, you will be asked to provide information on your project including:

1. **Project information:**
 - a. Check the box next to “New Project”
 - b. Under “Project Sponsor” please write “UW Learning Innovation and Teaching Enhancement Grant”
 - c. Provide the title of your proposed project
 - d. Start and end dates:
 - For February Seed Grants: May 1 to April 30 of the following year
 - For June Seed Grants: September 1 to August 31 of the following year
 - For October Seed Grants: January 1 to December 31 of the same year
 - e. Names and departments of the principal applicants and co-applicants
 - f. Keywords relevant to your project
2. **Certifications and Risk Declaration:** Of special note, you must declare **whether your project requires ethics clearance and if applicable, the ORE approval number.**
 - a. **Release of funds for successful applicants:** If ethics clearance is required for the project but the project has not yet been approved, the Office of Research will contact the principal investigator to verify that they have received ethics clearance before the funds are released. If funds are needed immediately before ethics clearance can be sought, the principal investigator can complete an early release form provided by the Office of Research.
3. **Collaborations:** Please indicate any matching funds. Select “no” for sending any funds to another institution, and “no” to the project being led by another institution

4. **Total project budget:** Input your proposed budget into the “Cash” and “Total” boxes. Input “0” for “overhead in cash” and “in-kind”. Select “yes” for maximum overhead.
5. **Waterloo Signatures: Endorsement signatures of both your department Chair and faculty Dean are required.** For staff members in an academic support unit, your immediate supervisor and Director would sign in place of the Chair and Dean. In the case that the Director of your unit is your supervisor, the Director’s supervisor would sign in the place of the Dean. Please note the deficit resolution responsibilities for chairs and supervisors in section 5 of the coversheet.
6. **Do not send the cover sheet to the Office of Research.** You do not fill in the section “Office of Research Signing Authority” and you do not need to get a signature from the Office of Research. **The cover sheet should be sent to CTE** along with the rest of your application.

Preparing your LITE Grant application

1. Applicants **must** use the [required application templates](#) and submit them as Word documents.
2. Maximum word count for Seed Grant proposals: **2000 words**. The project summary, timeline, budget, references, and relevant appendices (e.g., research instruments, protocols) are not included in the word count. Proposals should be written in 12-point font.
3. The proposal review process is blind. **Please ensure that all identifying information has been removed from the body of the proposal.**
4. Supporting materials should be included with your LITE Grant proposal whenever possible to help clarify and support the project’s assessment plans. Relevant materials may include course outlines, assignment descriptions, protocols, assignment rubrics, course learning outcomes, survey tools, etc.
5. Please refer to the report from [“The Task Force on Innovative Teaching Practices to Promote Deep Learning at the University of Waterloo”](#) for important references and definitions of terms that may be central to your proposal, such as “innovative teaching practices,” “deep learning,” and “effective teaching.”
6. Please connect the outcomes of your project to the [Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations](#) (UDLEs), and if applicable, program and accreditation outcomes.
7. The project timeline should reflect the following grant start dates:
 - For applications due February 1st, funding for approved projects begins May 1st
 - For applications due June 1st, funding for approved projects begins September 1st
 - For applications due October 1st, funding for approved projects begins January 1st of the following year
8. **Please note that grant holders will be held responsible for reimbursing over-expenditures.** Please refer to the University of Waterloo’s [deficit resolution procedure](#). Typically, if funds remain in the account at the conclusion of the grant period, they will revert to the Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic or the Centre for the Advancement of Co-operative Education.
9. Please note that any equipment or tools purchased with LITE grant funds remain property of the University of Waterloo. Justification to retain equipment or tools purchased with LITE grant funds in the department or school must be provided; otherwise, such equipment must be returned at the conclusion of the project to CTE, where it may be made available for other initiatives.

Resources to support your application

- Sample LITE Seed Grant proposals can be found under “Other Resources” on the [LITE Seed Grant website](#)
- [Teaching and Learning Research Guide](#): a comprehensive resource for designing and conducting research related to teaching and learning, created by CTE, Office of Research Ethics, and the Library
- Office of Research Ethics guidelines for [conducting research in classes or with students as study participants](#)
 - We especially recommend reading the “[Undue Influence and Manipulation](#)” section of these guidelines
- [Recommended salary rates](#) for research assistants
- [Guidelines about participant recruitment and anti-spam legislation](#)
- [Guidelines concerning fees related to learning resources and field trips](#)

Application submission

In order for your application to be considered, applicants are required to meet with [Annik Bolideau](#), Educational Developer – Research and Consulting at CTE (x41240) or [Brianna Bennett](#), Educational Research Associate at CTE (x47388) **within the first three weeks of the term. This meeting must occur, at the latest, 1 week prior to the submission deadline.** The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your project proposal and research plan and suggest ways to enhance the quality and clarity of the application. Please contact [Annik Bolideau](#), Educational Developer – Research and Consulting (x41240) or [Brianna Bennett](#), Educational Research Associate (x47388) to schedule this meeting.

Please submit the proposal as Microsoft Word documents using the provided templates to cte-lite@uwaterloo.ca.

Adjudication process

Seed Grants will be reviewed by two senior members of the Centre for Teaching Excellence. Recommendations will be made to the Associate Vice-President, Academic for final approval.

Proposal review criteria

a) Adherence to the submission requirements:

Does the proposal include all elements required under the LITE Grant Proposal Guidelines?

b) Clarity of project goals/outcomes:

Are the intended outcomes of the project stated in terms of student learning and/or enhanced teaching? Does the research question articulate a clearly-defined issue?

c) Project rationale and description, including review of relevant literature:

- Is a sound rationale established for the project?
- Is this rationale based on a succinct review of the relevant literature?

- Does the proposal describe how the project will build upon and contribute to student learning and/or enhanced teaching?

d) Plans for carrying out and assessing the project:

- Are project outcomes, student learning outcomes, and/or teaching enhancement outcomes clearly identified?
- Will evidence gathered as part of the research convincingly relate to the project, student learning, and/or teaching enhancement outcomes?
- Are the proposed research methods (data acquisition, analysis, etc.) appropriate to the project goals?
- If the project requires expertise in a certain area (e.g., qualitative research, statistical analysis, etc.), does the proposal confirm whether this expertise is held or not by the applicant(s)? If applicants do not have the expertise required, does the proposal explain where it will be sought and ensure that any related expenses are accounted for in the budget?

e) Feasibility:

Does the proposed timeline seem realistic and achievable, given the scope of the project?

f) Impact and transferability:

Are the contributions of the project to the members of the University of Waterloo learning community clearly articulated?

g) Plan for dissemination:

Are there clearly articulated plans for sharing the outcomes of the project with others at the University of Waterloo?

h) Budget:

Does the budget provide sufficient detail and justification regarding how funds will be spent? Is the budget realistic, given the scope of the project?

i) Sustainability:

Does the proposal demonstrate the practical and financial sustainability of the initiative beyond the grant's funds?

Information for successful applicants

Expectations of grant recipients

1. Participate in one or two meetings per semester where project questions and progress will be shared with other grant recipients. These meetings will be hosted and facilitated by the Centre for Teaching Excellence.
2. Disseminate findings of the project locally to the University of Waterloo learning community (as outlined in the Proposal Guidelines). Grant recipients may consult with members of the Centre for Teaching Excellence for suggestions regarding dissemination.

Completion time and reporting

Normally, funds for LITE Seed Grants should be spent within one year. In certain cases, however, and when the project design warrants, projects may run for 18 months. This may occur, for example, when the intent of the study is to gain evidence of the effect on student learning of implementing a change in a course offered only once a year (e.g., Fall 2021 and again in Fall 2022).

A final project report must be submitted one month after the completion of the project to Kyle Scholz at CTE. The report will then be sent to David DeVidi, Associate Vice-President, Academic (AVPA). Information from this report will be used to highlight the LITE Grant on the CTE website.