

2018 Spark Grant for Collaboration, Research, and Engagement Application Guidelines

Spark Grant Goals

Through modest but meaningful support, these grants for up to 15K are designed to help “spark” promising teaching and learning projects from idea to reality and position innovations for future success. Approximately five grants will be awarded each year, with the expectation that this funding mechanism will continue on an annual basis. Funding can be used in various ways; for example, to pay for a research assistant, hire a graduate student with academic technology expertise, or convene collaborative groups. Through Spark Grants, awardees will receive resources, feedback, and community support to help them develop their ideas into prototypes, pilots, and small-scale innovations. HILT will also strive to support any future scaling-up of Spark Grant projects by increasing their visibility and connecting awardees and project outcomes with others in the broader Harvard community.

Criteria

In general, grant proposals should align with HILT’s mission to catalyze innovation and excellence in teaching and learning at Harvard University.

Specifically, proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Generalizability** – To what extent can the proposed work generalize beyond a narrow context, either in and of itself or as an adoptable model? To what extent does it have the potential to impact teaching and learning at a University-wide level?
- **“Sparking”** – Will the proposed work catalyze something that would not occur otherwise? Does the funding enable a promising idea, rather than established projects or business-as-usual activities?
- **Sustainability** – How can the proposed work live beyond the life of the grant cycle? Is there a theory about the best institutional home for the work once the project is complete? (Note: Projects with a technological aspect in particular must align with existing campus technology infrastructure.)

Proposals that touch on one or more of the following areas are especially encouraged:

- **Collaboration** – How will the proposed work build connections across organizational or role lines? What partnerships have been or will be developed, across organizational or role lines, for the implementation of this work?
- **Research** – Can the proposed work facilitate high quality assessment practices and educational research? Does it experiment with and document new instructional practices? What will it contribute to evidence-based teaching and learning practices?
- **Engagement** – In what ways will the proposed work ultimately increase student engagement toward improved learning?

Priority will be given to those applicants who have not previously received HILT funding.

Eligibility

Harvard University benefits-eligible faculty, staff, and postdoctoral researchers are eligible to apply for funding, individually or as groups. While this does not disqualify other Harvard affiliates from applying, at least one collaborator must meet this criterion in order to be eligible for funding.

Those applicants whose proposed project has received or is being considered for additional funding sources should indicate this in the application budget template. Proposals for teaching relief, business-as-usual, or cost-shifting activities will not be awarded funding.

Because a fundamental aim of the Spark Grant program is to produce models that can be shared and implemented on a broader scale for the betterment of the Harvard community, any project or resource produced using Spark Grant support must be open source; proprietary projects will not be considered for funding.

Application

To submit a proposal, please see [the HILT website](#). The online application includes a 1-2 page proposal (.pdf) that answers the following question: **What do you propose to do, and why do you think HILT should fund this proposal?**

Competitive applications will articulate:

- project goals, scope, motivation, and assessment;
- relevant evidence and efforts;
- the potential generalizability of the project work to other teaching and learning areas of the Harvard community;
- a specific plan for measuring the success or impact of the work, and /or plans to share findings with the University community;
- any community members who have expressed support for the project;
- the intended project deliverable(s) (e.g., event; report; published paper);
- an estimated budget (please use the provided budget template within the online application, which includes the following line items: hardware, software, supplies/materials, travel, catering/food, honoraria, salary, video recording/editing, developer services, designer services, incentives, other, and any outside funding sources).

Materials submitted in the proposal process may be used to make connections, at HILT's discretion, with other members of the Harvard community who share similar interests and the grant review process may result in feedback to applicants from other members of the Harvard community. These efforts to connect and provide feedback are intended to provide benefit to all applicants, regardless of funding decision.

We recommend that you dedicate the majority of the two-page limit to the elements identified above. While you are welcome to hyperlink to additional information, the review committee may not read material beyond the two-page proposal.

Review

Applications are reviewed by members of the Harvard community, including faculty, teaching and learning center staff, academic technology managers, school and university leadership, and members of the Office of the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning, before faculty selection committee deliberations. Final decisions are made by the President and Provost.

Deliverables

Projects awarded funding will be posted publicly on HILT's web site and may be showcased at HILT events. At the project's conclusion, a short submission (e.g., written report, multimedia presentation, poster) is required as well as a discussion with the HILT team, indicating how the work has impacted teaching and learning, and how others can benefit from and advance the work.

Grant application timing and life cycle

The term of awarded funding is July/August 2018 to December 2019.

Application timing	2018 Award Cycle
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Application opens	February 21, 2018
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Proposals due	March 21, 2018
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Review period	April – June, 2018
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Awards announced	June, 2018
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Grant life cycle	2018 Award Cycle
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Award funds transferred	July/August, 2018 (<i>occurs only after an introductory meeting with the HILT team</i>)
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Final deliverable deadline	December 31, 2019 (<i>unused funds will be collected</i>)
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Annual	Networking reception for current and previous award recipients
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Questions?

Email us at hilt_grants@harvard.edu.