

Fall 2016 Spark Grant Application Guidelines

Spark Grant Goals

Through modest but meaningful support, these \$5-\$15K grants 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 semester. 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** – Can the proposed work generalize beyond a narrow context, either in actual work or as model? 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? Projects with a technological aspect in particular must align with existing campus technology infrastructure.

Proposals that build communities of practice around teaching and learning, facilitate high quality assessment practices and educational research, experiment with and document new instructional practices, involve collaborations that cross organizational boundaries and/or schools, and/or provide pedagogically-driven tools for teaching and learning (multimedia and instructional technology) are especially encouraged.

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

Eligibility

Harvard University benefits-eligible faculty, students, 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 their application. 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 [How to Apply](#). 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;
- how you will measure the success or impact of your work, and /or share findings with the University community;
- any community members who have expressed support for the project;
- the intended project deliverable (e.g., event; report; published paper);
- a high-level budget (identifying the costs of the proposed work; a detailed budget is not necessary).

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 with final decisions made by the President and Provost. The exact structure of the review process will be dependent on the number and nature of the proposals received.

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 September 2016 to June 2017.

Application timing	Fall 2016 cycle
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Application opens	June 15, 2016
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Proposals due	July 13, 2016
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Review period	July – August, 2016
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Awards announced	September, 2016
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Grant life cycle	Fall 2016 cycle
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Award funds transferred	September, 2016 (<i>occurs only after an introductory meeting with the HILT team</i>)
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Final deliverable deadline	June 30, 2017 (<i>unused funds will be collected</i>)
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Semesterly	Networking reception for current and previous award recipients
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Questions?

Email us at hilt_grants@harvard.edu.