Academic *Innovation* Fund

Phase Two (2015-2018)
Year 2 (2016-17) Application Guidelines

Background

The Academic Innovation Fund (AIF) was created in 2010 to encourage innovation in teaching, learning and the student experience. At that time (Phase 1), the purpose of the Fund was the provision of seed grants to faculty, staff and students to support a wide range of projects promoting teaching and learning and the student experience. Phase Two of the AIF, which began in 2015-16 and is currently underway, has taken a somewhat more focused approach, addressing three institutional priorities that are articulated in York's University Academic Plan (2010-2015) and Strategic Mandate Agreement: eLearning, experiential education, and the first year experience.

The success of AIF initiatives funded thus far has allowed York to build pan-University strategies and systems supporting the further growth and development of curricular innovation through various forms of eLearning and Experiential Education. Many of our students are currently benefiting from these innovations. Information about the projects that were funded in AIF Phase One and the first year of Phase Two can be found on the AIF website.

AIF Phase Two (2015-18)

The purpose of the Fund is to support the implementation of projects to advance York's institutional priorities in relation to eLearning, experiential education, and the first year experience. It is intended to encourage innovation and change at York by supporting new initiatives or those that extend current initiatives in significant new ways.

Funding Categories

There will be two categories of funding for 2016-2017. *Category I funding* will support initiatives of Schools, Departments and/or Faculties to strategically embed one or more of the three institutional priorities - eLearning, Experiential Education (EE) and the First Year Experience (FYE) - in undergraduate or graduate degrees. *Category II funding* will provide individual grants to full-time and contract faculty members who wish to redevelop their courses using eLearning (e.g. blended or fully online) and/or selected EE strategies. More information about these strategies can be found on the AIF website.

It is assumed that all proposals comply with Ontario's accessibility requirements.

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A total of $1.5 million will continue to be available annually over each of the next two years (i.e. 2016-2017 and 2017-2018). Category I project proposals may request one or two years of funding support. Approval for funding requests will be given in principle for year 2 of new projects and final approval will be based on the degree to which the project has met its agreed deliverables for the first year of funding.

For the 2016-17 year there will be two calls for AIF proposals. The first round of funding will be allocated towards projects that embed one or more of the current three institutional priorities - eLearning, Experiential Education (EE) and the First Year Experience (FYE). The second round will be announced at a later date (to be determined) to provide funding to support other teaching and learning priorities that might be identified by the Enhancing Teaching and Learning IIRP working group.

Category II course redesign funding is for one year only. Proposals will be accepted annually.

The two categories of funding available can be summarized as follows[1].

Category	Description	Funding Available
Category I Open to full-time faculty members	*Academic Innovation Projects:* Proposals will be considered that are curricular in nature and will assist with the embedding of eLearning, EE and/or FYE (curricular) strategies in degree programs. Highest priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate that they are sustainable, scalable and affordable. High priority will be given to grant requests from schools, departments or Faculties that have documented EE, eLearning and FYE plans.	Up to $100,000 per year
Category II Open to full-time and contract faculty members	*Curricular Innovation Grants:* Faculty members will be invited to submit proposals for redesigned courses using eLearning and/or EE strategies. *Grants for eLearning will support course redesign incorporating blended learning, fully online learning or the flipped classroom. Grants for EE will support the embedding of three (3) EE Strategies: Community Service Learning, Community Based Research and Placements.* High priority will be given to grant requests from schools, departments or Faculties that have documented EE and/or eLearning plans, which identify priorities for embedding strategies within degree programs.	$5,000 per 3 credit course, $8,000 per 6 credit course and $10,000 per 9 credit course

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[1] The Office of the Provost reserves the right to review the classification proposed by the applicant and may require further information or justification before agreeing to the proposed classification.

Assessment Process and Criteria

All proposals for Category I and II will be reviewed, approved and ranked by the Office of the Dean before being submitted to the Office of the Provost.

The AIF Steering Committee, chaired by the Associate Vice-President Teaching and Learning, will review all proposals and provide its recommendations to the Provost, who will make final decisions.

All applicants will be expected to use the common language and definitions for EE, eLearning and the First Year Experience (curricular) in the writing of their proposals.

Category I Application Process and Assessment Criteria

Please see the attached Category I *Academic Innovation Project* application form. Please note that projects funded in AIF Phase One (2011 – 14) are not eligible for Phase Two funding. Also note that the following expenditures are excluded from funding support: capital construction, building renovations, furnishings, release time and student financial aid.

The following criteria will be used to assess all Category I *Academic Innovation* project proposals.

Contribution of Project to Curricular Quality:
- The project deliverables are clearly stated in measurable terms. (15%)
- The implementation plan is clear and the project can be implemented in the timeframe and manner described (10%)
- Evidence that the project will be evaluated, along with a description of how the findings will be used and shared (10%)

Scalability:
- The initiative can be scaled to reach large numbers of students. (15%)
- The initiative will positively impact the Faculty's and York's reputation and the results of the project will be communicated and disseminated in a meaningful way. (10%)

Affordability and Sustainability:
- Evidence that the project is supported in Faculty plans for curricular innovation (15%)
- Evidence that the project will be supported by the Faculty and be sustainable beyond the (up to) two years of the AIF support. (15%)

Qualifications and Experience:
- The proposal includes, or provides for, a project work group with the relevant qualifications, knowledge and experience to ensure that the deliverables will be successfully achieved. (10%)

Category II Application Process and Assessment Criteria

Please see the attached Category II *Curricular Innovation Grant* application form.

The faculty member will be provided with both a research grant <u>and</u> in-kind professional development and technical support (including instructional design support and Moodle course creation/redesign support) from the Teaching Commons and Learning and Technology Services (or equivalent unit within the Faculty).

Note: The cost of any specialized approved software or any additional resources required for the redevelopment of the course will be the responsibility of the Faculty.

The following criteria will be used to assess all Category II *Curricular Innovation Grant* proposals.

Course Description:
- The student learning outcomes are clearly stated. (20%)*
- The course is described in sufficient detail, including information on assessment and how this will be impacted by the course redesign (10%)

Course Redesign:
- Rationale describes how the proposal strengthens the course and the degree program while advancing York's institutional priorities in relation to teaching and learning. (20%)

Scalability (eLearning only)
- Evidence that the course can be scaled to reach larger numbers of students and/or satisfies an unmet need in the degree program. (20%)

Community Partners (EE only)
- Inclusion of a clear description of what interaction will take place outside of the classroom and with whom. (20%)

Affordability and Sustainability:
- Evidence that the redesigned course will be supported by the School/Department and Faculty and that it is considered integral to the quality of the degree program. (20%)

Sharing Best Practices
- Evidence that the results of the course redesign will be communicated and disseminated in a meaningful way. (10%)

*The Teaching Commons and Learning and Technology Services staff may assist applicants in the preparation of their proposals upon request.

Requirements of all Successful Project Leads

All Project Leads will be required to submit both interim and final evaluation reports. Reporting requirements are linked to project funding transfers. All Project Leads will also be required to take part in meetings and workshops that will assist them in project management or course redesign.

Application Submission Process and Deadlines

Applicants must complete either the Category I or Category II application form and submit it electronically. Supplemental material should be submitted only if it is essential to the clear presentation of the project/initiative.

Applications for funding from the Academic Innovation Fund are to be submitted electronically to Office of the AVP Teaching and Learning (avptl@yorku.ca) and must be received **by 4:00 PM on Friday, February 12, 2016.**