

Innovation in Assessment Grant Opportunity

Introduction

Good assessment is essential for a university to be able to improve its academic programs, provide exceptional student experiences, and function effectively. The University of Maine is committed to continuously improving the educational experience of students. The Innovation in Assessment Grant Initiative has been developed by The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) to provide a way to monetarily support UMaine faculty and staff members in their pursuit of program excellence. The purpose of the program is to foster a culture of continuous improvement by supporting informed decision-making using assessment. The grants are offered as a way for faculty and staff to investigate new avenues in assessment, strengthen existing assessment designs, or assist programs or units to implement action plans. This opportunity is available to faculty and staff at UMaine and UMaine Machias.

To further support the development and use of assessment information for improvement, OIRA is offering \$4000 over two grant opportunities for UMaine faculty or staff members in academic areas this year. **Option 1** are grants up to the amount of \$1,000 to conduct assessment-related projects or initiatives that directly support student learning outcome assessment processes for undergraduate, graduate, or certificate programs. **Option 2** are grants of \$500 to pilot the Brightspace learning outcomes tools within a class you are teaching. More information on both options can be found below.

Option 1: Assessment Projects

Assessment grants are being offered to help teaching faculty and support staff engage in sound practices of assessment which lead to usable results and to generate models that can inform the assessment efforts of others across campus.

Successfully funded projects will contribute to the ongoing development of UMaine by providing “seed” money for programs or units to:

- Develop assessment initiatives to enhance student learning or the student experience across campus.
- Develop a community of practitioners engaged in the assessment/continuous improvement process.
- Generate examples of sound assessment practices that can be used by others across campus.

Examples of Appropriate Projects

All proposed projects will be considered for an award. However, priority will be given to those proposals that focus on developing or implementing direct measures of student learning. Some examples of potential uses of awarded funds are given below.

- Stipends to analyze and report data (examining student learning across two sections of a course taught by different methods, etc.)
- Stipends to develop assessment instruments (e.g., capstone course project, rubric development, development of test items)
- Funding for supporting assessment group meetings/workshops (guest speakers, food, materials)

Funds may not be used for activities financed through other sources unless additional funds are needed to complete the project. In these cases, programs need to be specific and differentiate between how funding from each source will be used. Grants will not be awarded for faculty or staff travel or to cover student incentives.

Proposal Review and Award Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed by personnel in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and members of the Assessment Advisory Board and evaluated based on the quality of the design and the grant's potential to contribute to ongoing assessment efforts at UMaine. All grants must tie directly to the assessment of student learning.

Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Purpose: How is the project expected to enhance assessment activities in the unit or program?
 - Method of Investigation: Is the methodology being used appropriate? Or, will the implementation of the action plan likely have the desired effect?
 - Measurable Outcomes: Did the program or unit define measurable outcomes for the project and explain how these aligned with their overall program or unit outcomes?
 - Analysis/Interpretation of Results: How will the results be analyzed and/or findings interpreted?
 - Appropriate Use of Funds: Are the funds being used for appropriate activities?
 - Dissemination: How will the findings/information learned from this project be disseminated to the greater UMaine community?
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Option 2: Brightspace Course Pilots

Assessment grants are also being offered for faculty interested in piloting the Brightspace learning outcomes tools in their courses. The learning outcomes tools allow faculty and students to view their progress towards achieving the learning outcomes set for the course, separate from assignment grades. In order to qualify for this grant, we ask that you:

- Be teaching a course in-person or online that uses Brightspace for assessing student learning (i.e. you will give quizzes or have students submit assignments in Brightspace, and you provide feedback via Brightspace).
- Have an initial meeting with OIRA staff to plan the use of the learning outcome tools soon after the grant is awarded (fall courses) or early in the new year (spring courses).
- Be willing to work with OIRA staff several times throughout the semester (as needed) to align your learning outcomes with your assignments (including rubrics, if used).
- Have at least five different assignments (anything from a discussion board post to a final exam) that you will give in Brightspace.
- Be willing to share the outcomes view of student achievement in Brightspace with students (this information cannot be hidden from students, and may require some explanation of what they are seeing).

Proposal Review and Award Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed by personnel in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and members of the Assessment Advisory Board and evaluated based on the variety and number of assessments that will be implemented via Brightspace and whether they seem amenable to using the learning outcome tools.

Requirements After Award

Awardees of all grants must be willing to share their assessment projects and results with the greater UMaine community. The majority of the work should take place during the 2022-23 academic year and awardees must submit a [summary of their findings](#) to OIRA by Sept 1, 2023. This summary should be less than 500 words and report on the results of the project, any challenges encountered during implementation, and future plans. This report will be posted on the OIRA website. In addition, the activities implemented or conducted as part of this award should be highlighted in annual assessment reports submitted by the program or unit. Awardees will also be asked to participate in an assessment forum in fall 2023.

Deadlines

Applications are due October 1st, 2022. All awardees will be notified by October 15, 2022.

Questions and Submission

To apply for an Assessment Grant please submit an application cover sheet and proposal form (attached). Completed forms should be submitted via email in PDF form with the following file name structure:

- Assessment Grant Proposal_PI Name.pdf

For review submit to: amanda.barrington@maine.edu by October 1st, 2022.

Assessment Grant Initiative Proposal Form

Title of Proposal (use "Brightspace Pilot" for Option 2 submissions): _____

Department or Program: _____

Faculty Member(s) or Staff Member(s): _____

Academic Rank or Title: _____

Email Address and Campus Phone Number: _____

Amount of funds requested: _____ (up to \$1000 for Option 1 or \$500 for Option 2)

Project description (750 words or less):

Option 1: Assessment Projects

- Please give a detailed description of the assessment project being proposed.
- How do you expect the project to enhance the assessment activities in your unit or program?
- How do the outcomes for this project align with those of your program or unit?
- How do you plan to analyze the results and use the findings?
- How will the findings/information learned from this project be disseminated to the greater UM community?

Option 2: Brightspace Course Pilots

- Please give your course name, number, estimated enrollment, and term it will be taught (Fall 2022 or Spring 2023).
- Approximately how many assignments do you plan to give within Brightspace?
- Describe the types of assignments you will give in Brightspace (i.e. discussions, quizzes, essays, term papers, etc.).
- Attach a copy of your syllabus (a draft is fine if it isn't finalized yet) so we can view your learning outcomes and assignments.

Estimated timeline (100 words or less, Only needed for Option 1):

Detailed budget information (Only needed for Option 1):

Please complete the attached table with a brief outline of how you expect to use the grant funds awarded.

Expenditure	Justification of Expenditure	Amount
Equipment or supplies		
Personnel cost or stipend		
Other:		
Total:		

*Commitment Statement: I commit to using grant funds as specified in the proposal document and for purposes of enhancing assessment initiatives across campus. I will provide a [follow up report](#) to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment by September 1, 2023.

Signature of Applicant:

Signature of Chair or Program Director:

Date: