Integrated Learning Initiative
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Learning Effectiveness Research Grant - Request for Proposals

MITili Research Grant Goals	Evaluate and disseminate learning effectiveness
Who may be Interested	MIT faculty with transformative learning effectiveness research ideas
Range of Award Size	Up to $100,000
Full Proposal Submission Date	June 4, 2019 (5:00p ET)

In keeping with MIT's mission of "advancing knowledge and educating students in science, technology, and other areas of scholarship that will best serve the nation and the world in the 21st century," the MIT Integrated Learning Initiative (MITili), part of MIT Open Learning, is pleased to announce a request for proposals from MIT faculty to **evaluate** learning effectiveness.

MITili's mission is to fund, connect, and share learning effectiveness research--that is, research that explores what works and what doesn't in the realm of learning. MITili seeks to fund learning effectiveness research that leverages rigorous randomized or quasi-experimental research designs suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal to **evaluate** the impact of learning experiences and/or educational policies at the birth to pK-12, higher education, and/or workplace/lifelong learning levels.

- A learning experience might be as short as a brief learner-instruction interaction, as long as a degree, or at a lesson, class, or course level in between.
- Educational policies define the environment in which learning experiences take place.

Examples of learning effectiveness research include but are not limited to the following:

1. How **learner differences** (for instance, prior knowledge, motivation, or physiological readiness) affect outcomes for a given piece of instruction
2. How **instruction differences** (for instance, varying presentation of content or human versus digital delivery) affect outcomes for a given group of learners

3. How **policy differences** (for instance, existing versus new teacher licensure procedures) affect outcomes for a given combination of learners and instruction

While a successful proposal may spend part of its resources **creating** one or more learning experiences, the majority of resources should be devoted to the **evaluation** of the learning experience(s).

Eligibility
Eligible projects must be submitted and overseen by an MIT faculty member, lecturer, researcher, post-doctoral associate, or graduate student (collectively, the "Sponsor"). Projects may include undergraduate students. While Sponsors may submit more than one proposal, please note that it is highly unlikely that more than one project from the same Sponsor will be funded.

Awards
MITili requires that grant requests not exceed $100,000 and that the duration be between 6 and 18 months. Those amounts should only include direct expenses; MITili will separately add any amounts needed to cover Institute overhead. MITili expects to award between 4 to 6 grants. Applicants may re-apply in subsequent years.

Research Commitment
During the project period, awardees may be asked to join one or two internal meetings to discuss research progress. Awardees are required to submit a short report documenting project findings due at the end of the project period. Awardees are expected to present their findings at a campus event in the year following the project period. Awarded projects will be highlighted on the MITili website. Following completion of the project, MITili encourages researchers to submit their work for publication/presentation in/at an appropriate peer-reviewed journal or conference.

Key Dates

Request for Proposals Released	Tues, May 14, 2019
Office Hours (optional)	By appointment week of May 20, 2019
Statement of Interest Deadline (0ptional)	5:00p ET on Fri, May 24, 2019
Full Proposal Deadline	5:00p ET on Tue, June 4, 2019
Decisions Announced (tentative)	Fri, June 28, 2019

Statement of Interest Preparation and Submission (optional)
Following the MITili office hours (during which MITili staff will be available to discuss this RFP and the general direction/applicability of a candidate project), interested proposers may optionally submit a statement of interest--to gauge more specific fit with MITili's objectives--that includes the following information.

- Project title
- Project sponsor name, title, contact information, and MIT department
- Demographics of learners the project is addressing
- Summary of intended research project (500 word limit)
- Estimated budget

The Statement of Interest may be submitted to Steve Nelson of MITili by MIT mail (NE49-2000) or by email (smnelson@mit.edu) in paper, MS Word, Adobe PDF, Google Doc, or similar format.

MITili's Director and Deputy Director, supported by a faculty advisory committee and MITili staff, will evaluate any statements of interest and work with proposers to assess appropriateness for submitting a full proposal.

Full Proposal Preparation and Submission
A full proposal includes two components.

- **Project Description**: a detailed description of the project including the following elements; you may use a copy of this Google Doc as a template or provide the same information in a format of your choosing (the first 5 items are identical to those from the optional Statement of Interest).
    - Project title
    - Project sponsor name, title, contact information, and MIT department
    - Demographics of learners the project is addressing
    - Summary of intended research project (500 word limit)
    - Estimated budget
    - Research team biographical sketches
    - Project goals/gauging success (250 word limit)
    - Outcome measurement (250 word limit)
    - Others potentially interested in findings (250 word limit)
    - Other information (250 word limit)

- **Budget:** an account of funds requested (see Appendix for the MITili Financial Policy); you may use a copy of this Google Sheet as a template or provide the same information in a spreadsheet format of your choosing.
    - Personnel that directly supports project
        - Salaries and wages
        - Employee benefits
        - UROPs
    - Non-Personnel that directly supports project
        - Materials and services
        - Equipment (but not for staff; e.g., no computers/mobile devices)
        - Travel

The Full Proposal may be submitted to Steve Nelson of MITili by MIT mail (NE49-2000) or email (smnelson@mit.edu) in paper, MS Word, Adobe PDF, Google Doc, or similar format. The budget must be submitted as a separate MS Excel, Google Sheet, or other spreadsheet document.

Full Proposal Evaluation Criteria

MITili seeks to fund projects across a broad range of MIT affiliations. MITili's Director and Deputy Director, supported by a faculty advisory committee and MITili staff, will evaluate proposals using the following criteria:

- On the topic of **evaluating** learning effectiveness
- Innovativeness of research idea
- Well-defined success metrics for the project
- Feasibility of implementing findings in practical settings
- Scalability to broader learner populations

Each full proposal will be reviewed by at least one faculty member and one staff member. The committee may request additional information or modifications to the proposal before funding decisions are made. All decisions are final and MITili will not able to give individual feedback regarding decisions.

Please direct inquiries to MITili Program Manager Steve Nelson at smnelson@mit.edu.

Appendix

MITili Financial Policy

MIT Open Leaning's (MITOL) Financial Policy applies to approved, funded projects from the MIT Integrated Learning Initiative (MITili).

Project account set up: Once the PI has been awarded the MITILI grant, accounts will be set up within the DLC's Profit Center and MITOL's Funds Center. DLC designated administrative and finance staff will be granted purchasing and reporting authorizations. Funds provided to projects are available for approved costs while the project account is open.

Project account closure: If the project will not be completed by the anticipated end date, the PI or project lead will contact the MITILI Collaborative Director and Finance Coordinator with a request for an extension. This request will include the requested duration of the extension (up to 6 months) and will be submitted at least two weeks before the planned close of the funding account. Requests for extensions submitted within two weeks of the planned closure of the project funds will not be accepted.

Please note that all extension requests are subject to review by the MITILI and that decisions will be sent to DLC AOs.

Unused project funding: After a project account closes, any unused funds will be transferred back to MITOL. Once unused funds are returned to MITOL, the DLC will no longer have access or entitlement to those funds.

For more information about the MITili Financial Policy, please contact Peter Kearns, MITOL Financial Coordinator, pkearns@mit.edu or 617-324-3852.