



University of Pittsburgh

2019 Pitt Seed Project Selection Process

1. OVERVIEW

The success of the University’s strategic plan is predicated upon engagement across the University. One of the focused efforts directed toward this engagement is the annual opportunity for faculty and staff to submit ideas for transformative projects that are directed toward supporting one or more of the six goals and associated strategies within The Plan for Pitt.

2. WHAT ARE PITT SEED PROJECTS?

Pitt Seed Projects are well-defined actions that will play an instrumental role in transforming the University of Pittsburgh. Proposed projects can include a range of activities, including: research ideas, academic programs, process improvement, diversity, community and industry partnership development, outreach, methods of teaching and learning, workshops, lectures and enhancing the student experience.

3. FUNDING

Annually, the Chancellor’s Office will invest funds to support the Pitt Seed Project initiative. **Applicants can request up to \$50,000 for a Pitt Seed Project.**

4. ELIGIBILITY

All faculty and staff members at the University of Pittsburgh are eligible to apply for funding. Applicants may serve as a Principal Investigator on only one project; however, applicants may serve as collaborators on multiple projects. Applicants are encouraged to include students as team members. The table below highlights specific eligibility requirements for concept document submission.

Principal Investigator	Letter of Support
Faculty	Applicants must submit letters from their respective Department Chair and the Dean of their school indicating support of the concept document and approval of any departmental resources committed.
Staff	Applicants must submit letters from their respective Unit/Department Director and Senior Vice Chancellor indicating support of the concept document and approval of any departmental resources committed.

5. LETTER OF INTENT

Any person who is interested in applying for a Pitt Seed grant must first submit a letter of intent by the due date listed below. After letters of intent are received, applications will open and will be due one month later.

- Letters of intent are required.
- Letters of intent are due **Friday, Feb. 8, 2019, at 12 p.m.**
- Two pages max (single-spaced).
- Briefly describe:
 - Overview of your proposed project.
 - Desired outcomes.
 - Resources needed.
 - Plan for sustainability.
- Please identify the primary goals and strategies in The Plan for Pitt with which your project will align.



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Note: The letter of intent will not be adjudicated, but it is required that you submit a letter of intent if you plan to submit an application. The letter of intent was not required in the pilot year but will be required this year and every year going forward.

6. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

After the deadline for the letter of intent, applications will open.

Completed applications with all supporting materials are due by **Friday, March 8, 2019, at 12 p.m.**

Format Requirements

- ✓ Concept Overview (500 words max.)
- ✓ Plan for Pitt Alignment (250 words max.)
- ✓ Outcome (250 words max.)
- ✓ Required Resources (250 words max.)
- ✓ Sustainability (250 words max.)
- ✓ Letters of Support (file upload)
- ✓ CV, Biosketch, or Resume of PI (file upload)

Content Requirements

Section	Description
Team Members	Please list all team members (including Principal Investigator), respective roles and qualifications.
Concept Overview	Briefly describe the proposed opportunity and proposed actions.
Plan for Pitt Alignment	Indicate how the opportunity and proposed actions support The Plan for Pitt.
Outcome	If concept is implemented, please indicate how you will measure success.
Required Resources	List the types of resources required and high-level cost estimates.
Sustainability	If relevant, please describe ongoing resource requirements and the sustainability plan once seed funding ends.
Letters of Support	Faculty must submit a letter of support from their Department Chair and Dean. Staff must submit a letter of support from their Unit/Department Director and respective Senior Vice Chancellor.

7. REVIEW CRITERIA

Concept documents and proposals will be reviewed and scored based on the following criteria:

- **Plan for Pitt Alignment** – Proposals should support one or more goal/strategy within the University’s strategic plan. Proposals that support multiple goals/strategies are encouraged.
- **Impactful** – Proposals should clearly articulate the anticipated results/outputs/outcome of the proposed actions in measurable terms.
- **Transformational** – Proposals should emphasize how the opportunity and/or proposed actions are transformational and/or an area of distinction for the University.
- **Transdisciplinary** – Applicants are encouraged to reach across multiple academic and/or business units when developing a proposal. In addition, external partnerships with industry and/or the community will be favorably reviewed.



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A distinct advantage will be given to proposals that can demonstrate long-term sustainability as well as institutional support (e.g. matching funds) from other units within the or external to the University.

Additionally, while all applications are welcome, priority will be given to projects that address the areas below, which are priorities of the Chancellor and Provost:

- **Data:** Examine the many ways that students provide data, and how the University uses it.
 - Goal 1: Advance Educational Excellence
 - Strategy: Serve as a leader in personalizing educational experiences of undergraduate, graduate and professional students, with attention to mentorship, advising and tailoring engagement to the goals of individual students.
 - Goal 2: Engage in Research of Impact
 - Strategy: Expand our computational capacity, human and physical, to meet research needs across a broad range of disciplines into the future.
 - Strategy: Extend the impact of our research through application to practice, policy development and commercial translation.
 - Goal 6: Build Foundational Strength
 - Strategy: Transform information infrastructure to expand our reach and better support recruitment, research, learning and operational efficiency.
- **Collaborations:** Forge partnerships with the local community and beyond to find ways for Pitt to serve as a support resource.
 - Goal 1: Advance Educational Excellence
 - Strategy: Promote access and affordability through partnerships with local school districts, increased voluntary support for student aid, improved time-to-degree for all students and expanded access to master's and professional education.
 - Goal 3: Strengthen Communities
 - Strategy: Foster a culture of civic engagement, seeking to increase societal impact.
 - Goal 5: Embrace the World
 - Strategy: Connect our domestic and international pursuits to generate synergies that help strengthen our communities.
- **Campus Climate:** Create programs and opportunities that support a campus climate of inclusivity.
 - Goal 1: Advance Educational Excellence
 - Strategy: Enrich the student experience through engagement with diverse cultures and perspectives and expanded opportunities for study abroad and by integrating global perspectives in the curriculum.
 - Goal 4: Promote Diversity and Inclusion
 - Strategy: Transform the campus climate to reinforce the value of diversity and inclusion as essential to advancing our teaching, research, community engagement and to enriching the student experience.



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8. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS

All Pitt Seed Project awardees are required to:

- Ensure that resources are utilized according to what is outlined in the concept document.
- Submit midyear and year-end reports to pittseed@pitt.edu indicating progress.
- If applicable, submit outcome metrics to pittseed@pitt.edu on an annual basis for a minimum of three years post-implementation.

9. IMPORTANT DATES

If you would like to learn more about the Pitt Seed grant process or ask questions, you may consider attending one of the information sessions below.

- **Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2019**
3:30-4:30 p.m.
Alumni Hall, Room 121
- **Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019**
12-1 p.m.
Posvar Hall, Room 2500
- **Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019**
1-2 p.m.
William Pitt Union, Room 630

Timeline	
Competition Opens	December 2018
Letter of Intent Due*	Friday, Feb. 8, 2019 (noon)
Completed Application With Supporting Documents Due	Friday, March 8, 2019 (noon)
Funded Projects Announced	First Week of June 2019
Orientation Sessions	June 10-June 28, 2019
Funding Available	Monday, July 1, 2019

** Note: The letter of intent was not required last year, but it is mandatory for all applicants to be considered this year.*

10. CONTACT

Please read the **Questions and Answers** below before reaching out.

If you still need help, email pittseed@pitt.edu.



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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to serve as a Principal Investigator on a Pitt Seed Project?

Any Pitt faculty or staff member is eligible to serve as a Principal Investigator on a Pitt Seed Project. All Pitt students, postdoctoral associates, scholars and fellows are eligible to serve as Pitt Seed Project team members.

Can an individual serve as a Principal Investigator on more than one Pitt Seed Project?

No. However, an individual may serve as a team member on multiple applications.

Can undergraduate students be included as Pitt Seed Project team members?

Absolutely! Engaging students in a Pitt Seed Project is highly encouraged.

Can a Pitt Seed Project application include more than one Principal Investigator?

No.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Will the program offer information sessions for applicants prior to the deadline?

Yes. We will have a series of informational sessions in January. Please check the "important dates" section for more information. Note: Applicants are not required to attend an information session. You can also email any questions to pittseed@pitt.edu.

Will there be resources available from the University to support program management?

Unfortunately, no. We encourage you to include the necessary resources within your project budget.

Will we be assigned a grant manager?

No. The Principal Investigator or designees will be responsible for managing the administration of the project.

NOTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

When will applicants be notified of decisions?

Applicants will be notified in early June. Funding for all projects will be available July 1, pending completion of an orientation session during the month of June.

What time period is covered during the cycle of funding?

You may budget funding for up to two years. Note: You will be asked to submit a midyear and year-end report for each year that your project is running.

When would all funds need to be spent?

You can request funding for up to two years. The funding period runs from July 1-June 30 each academic year.

PROJECT SCOPE

What kinds of projects have been funded in the past?

You can see the projects that were funded in the pilot year [here](#).

Can Pitt Seed Projects fund individual research projects?

This depends on numerous factors. Each project will be assessed relative to the review criteria.



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Can Pitt Seed Project funds be used to fund other pilot projects?

This would be reviewed on a case by case basis.

APPLICATION CONTENT

How detailed should the sustainability section of the application be?

The sustainability section should include details on how the work will continue after the seed funding ends. It is important that all initiatives are self-sustaining. If a project has a definitive end that corresponds to when funding ends, please note this in the application's sustainability section.

In addition to the 250-word description of resources requested, can I submit a budget as an Excel document?

You may include a table, such as one generated in an Excel document, in the resource section of the application.

What is the required length for the proposal under "content requirements"?

Applications must adhere to the "word" length requirements. Applications do not need to adhere to specific page limits.

Are there assessment standards to determine the effectiveness of the program?

The Principal Investigator is expected to define in the application how effectiveness and/or impact of their proposed project will be evaluated.

FUNDING

How can Pitt Seed Project funding be spent?

Funds can be used to offset Pitt faculty and staff members' time, temporary workers, travel, capital purchases, consulting, software and other expenses needed to successfully implement the project. Because of the limited duration, funds cannot be used to hire new Pitt faculty or staff. Award funds must be expended in accordance with University policy. Supplemental, overtime and temporary wages are subject to tax reporting and withholding, but are not eligible for defined contribution deductions or matching.

Can Pitt Seed Project funds be used for administrative support (e.g., project coordinator salary support) for the proposed project?

Yes, the funds can be used to support an existing position, a temporary worker or a consultant. No new staff members should be hired with Pitt Seed Project funds. Supplemental, overtime and temporary wages are subject to tax reporting and withholding, but are not eligible for defined contribution deductions or matching.

Can Pitt Seed Project funds be used to pay students for project work?

Yes, within University guidelines.

Can Pitt Seed Project funds be used to compensate people who are external to Pitt?

This is permissible under a contract for services that complies with University purchasing policies. Expenses incurred would be included in the contract and paid via invoice.

Do we need to follow University policy regarding all purchases?

Yes. Per University purchasing policies, University-wide contracted suppliers must be used when available. Purchases from other suppliers and service providers must comply with the University's competitive bidding and directed or sole source policy.

Could we establish a postdoctoral fellowship under this grant?

No. Given the short duration of the Pitt Seed Project funding, the creation of a postdoctoral fellowship would not be feasible.



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Is there any preference, from the selection committee's viewpoint, as to how the money is used?

No. The focus is on the outcome of the project and how it supports The Plan for Pitt, not on the type of resources used.

Can funds be used to pay for professional services from another Pitt organization, such as the University Center for Teaching and Learning?

Yes.

Is there a limit on what fraction of the budget can be used for consultation or services external to Pitt?

No. There are no designated budget percentage requirements based on expense type.

"Total amount requested" does not accurately reflect my actual project costs. What if I need to provide additional clarification to inform the budget?

You may indicate your project's total budget in the resource section; however, you must identify the exact level of funding that you are requesting from the Pitt Seed Project initiative.

If we were to form a partnership, would the University commit ongoing budgetary support, such as paying the salary for a key staff person?

No. All Pitt Seed Projects that extend beyond the two-year funding time frame must be self-sustaining.

What cost center/unit will the funding be allocated to for the project?

The specifics of budget logistics will be discussed with awardees during the mandatory orientation sessions in June.

Who has access to the funds? Is access limited to the Principal Investigator?

Access is limited to the Principal Investigator and unit business manager. Level reports must be reviewed and reconciled each month in accordance with University policy.

May this money be used for tuition remission?

No.

Do we get a purchase card or are expenses reimbursed?

A budget will be established in a defined account for each Pitt Seed Project, and spending of these funds must comply with existing University policies.

Will there be a Pitt Seed Project renewal option?

To receive additional funds for an established Pitt Seed Project, you would need to compete again to receive funding as part of a future application call.

What, if any, expectations exist for in-kind contributions?

There is no set percentage or dollar amount for unit level support/matching funds. However, it will be considered a positive attribute if units are willing to commit some type of support for a proposed project.

Does this program allow to budget for instruments, such as a microscope?

Yes, adhering to University policies.

Can we use these funds for student housing?

No.



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Can we use these funds for student travel (to/from campus and for participation in national-scale conferences to report their results)?

Yes. Funds may be requested for travel.

Can we use these funds for research materials and supplies?

Yes, adhering to University policies.

Can we use these funds for socialization activities?

Yes, but you would need to demonstrate why this is an integral part of the work outlined in the application. In addition, business entertainment expenses must comply with University policies.

Can we claim contributions from our partners (meeting space and catering funds, for example) as matching funds?

Yes.

MISCELLANEOUS

If awarded, is there a specific reporting process that we need to follow?

Yes. All Pitt Seed Project awardees are required to:

- Ensure that resources are utilized according to what is outlined in the concept document.
- Submit a midyear and year-end report to pittseed@pitt.edu indicating progress.
- If applicable, submit outcome metrics to pittseed@pitt.edu on an annual basis for a minimum of three years post-implementation.

What happens to intellectual property if the University accepts the application to support my project/idea? If my project is incorporated, what percentage of the University shares equity?

The award funds will be transferred to a University account designated by the awardee. Award funds must be expended in accordance with University policy. After completion of the seed funding activities, the awardee will submit Invention Disclosures to the Innovation Institute in order to document, assess and protect any new intellectual property developed by the investigator during the course of the award. If the University licenses or commercializes any intellectual property, the awardees that are considered as inventors, creators or developers will receive a share of proceeds consistent with the terms of the University of Pittsburgh Patent Rights and Technology Transfer Policy (11-02-01) or Copyright Policy (11-02-02), as applicable.

If you have specific questions that were not answered above, please email pittseed@pitt.edu.