



2024 Assessment Mini Grant Program: Call for Proposals

Due Date: January 29, 2024

The University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) invites Western Michigan University faculty and staff to submit proposals for assessment project mini grants. These grants are being offered to support assessment projects that promote improvements in teaching, learning, as well as curricular and co-curricular program delivery and enhancements. \$15,000 will be awarded in individual grants at a maximum amount of \$2,200 each for FY 2024. Assessment mini grants are designed to provide support for initiatives that promote and are informed by student learning and development, for the purpose of continuous improvement and success.

The UASC has adopted the following definition for assessment:

“Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning” (Huba & Freed, 2000, p. 8).

Purpose

At WMU, [our strategic vision](#) focuses on holistic student growth and success for every learner, both in and outside of the classroom. The Office of the Provost and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness in collaboration with the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC), supports this learner-centered growth mindset through funding projects and initiatives that are designed to improve or enhance student learning and other student outcomes as an important measure of student success.

Through the assessment mini grant program, we intend to:

- Help programs to build engagement and participation in assessment of student learning
- Build and expand the assessment toolboxes for our community
- Promote continuous improvement efforts for student learning and student success
- Promote a culture of data-informed decision-making
- Show the importance and priority that our leadership places on providing support for our community to participate in on-going improvement efforts

Focus

Proposals for the assessment mini grants should address one or more of the following areas:

1) *Course or activity level learning outcomes assessment* - Examples of project ideas include but are not limited to:

- Assessing the impact of changes focused on improving Ds, Fs, withdrawals and incompleteness rates in a specific course

- Piloting and evaluating the impact of equitable and inclusive assessment methods in a course or activity
- Assessing the impact of a student intervention strategy(s) designed to promote sense-of-belonging and/or well-being

2) *Assessment methods* - Examples of project ideas include but are not limited to:

- Developing and/or refining a rubric for assessing learning at a course, activity or program level
- Creating and/or refining and implementation of new assessment method(s) to address learning outcomes (i.e., self or peer assessments, surveys, performance assessment etc,)
- Evaluating reliability and validity of an assessment instrument

3) *Alignment project* – Examples of project ideas include but are not limited to:

- Developing and/or refining the alignment of course outcomes and assessments to program-level learning outcomes
- Creating and/or refining a signature assignment to serve as a summative assessment in a capstone course or final project
- Creating a curriculum map (for an academic or co-curricular program) that shows alignment of the learning and/or operational outcomes with overarching goals of the college or division

4) *Program/Unit Level Learning Outcomes Assessment* – Examples of project ideas include but are not limited to:

- Creating and/or refining a program/unit level assessment plan
- Disaggregating data to investigate equity gaps in student learning and/or operational outcomes, and implementing strategies in the program/unit to reduce those gaps
- Evaluation of assessment data/results to identify areas for improvement and creating an action plan for addressing those areas

While all assessment-related proposals will be considered, additional consideration will be given to proposals that meet the following priorities:

- 1) Proposals from new applicants who have not previously received an assessment mini grant.
- 2) Proposals that explicitly demonstrate direct alignment with and have the potential to impact the [University's strategic planning key priority areas](#).
- 3) Proposals that have potential to impact an upcoming specialized accreditation reaffirmation.

Information about previously funded projects can be found here:

<https://wmich.edu/assessment/assessment-grant-recipients-archive>

Eligibility requirements

Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements and submit a cover page and narrative proposal (following specifications on page 5 below) by **January 29, 2024** at 8 p.m. Eastern. The UASC reserves the right to provide full funding for the proposal, to provide partial funding, to request that the applicant

offer further elaboration or clarification on specific points, and/or to suggest alternate sources of funding.

- Full and part-time faculty and staff from academic departments, interdisciplinary units, and learner support units may apply.
- Any department, program or unit that has student learning or development as part of its mission may apply.
- Individuals or teams may apply. Graduate students may participate as team members; however, a faculty or staff member must actively serve as the principal investigator.
- Individuals may submit only one application on which the individual will serve as the PI. There are no restrictions on the number of applications on which an individual may be listed as a team member. The PI must be an active participant in the assessment project.
- No more than one proposal per program/unit will be reviewed for possible funding each fiscal year.
- All applicants must be able to support project funds through a university department at the outset. Initial funding will come from the department or unit of the principal investigator from a fund 11 account. Grant funds will be reimbursed (following the allowable costs guidelines of this grant program) to the department up to the \$2,200 maximum.
- Each proposal must be completed in full to be considered by the review committee.

Award requirements

Successful grant recipients are required to complete the following activities at the conclusion of the project:

- Submit a brief (no more than 5 pages) report describing the project, its outcomes, and how results were or will be used. Reports are due to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by **November 18, 2024**. Output and/or results will be used to demonstrate the possibilities that may arise from these grants and will be circulated to the UASC and potentially, academic deans and the provost.
- All grant recipients will be asked to attend the spring 2025 Measures of Success Educator Impact Series to give a presentation and/or participate in a panel discussion. (More information about the series date(s) and expectations will be shared as it is available from the UASC and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.)
- Grant recipients authorize the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to post project output and results/findings on the ScholarWorks Assessment page.
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/assessment_faculty_grant/
- If the work results in a publication or project, please acknowledge that support for the work came from the UASC Assessment Mini Grant Program with the following acknowledgement of support: *"This work was supported by funds from the UASC Assessment Mini Grant Program, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Western Michigan University."*
- A brief meeting will be set up for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness staff, PI(s), CoPI(s) and budget administrator(s) to go over details and answer any funding questions prior to the start of the project work.

Note regarding Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB): Assessment proposals that do not meet the federal definition of research or human subject (45 CFR 46) do not require HSIRB review, approval and oversight; however, in order to publish the results in a professional journal, HSIRB approval should be sought prior to implementation and data collection. Most assessments designed to

measure achievement of desired student learning outcomes at the classroom, program, or institutional level do not require HSIRB oversight. For questions, please contact the associate director for research compliance at 387-8293 or via e-mail at research-compliance@wmich.edu.

Allowable costs

The grant may be used to fund the items listed below. *Please note that all expenses must follow all WMU fiscal policies/guidelines.*

- **Assessment books and resources (cannot exceed 20% of award)**
Within the budget narrative, provide justification for the need of assessment-related books and resources and the expected impact on current and/or future assessment-planning efforts.
- **Assessment instruments or software**
Purchasing licensing for an assessment-related instrument and/or software is permitted. Include description of and justification for instrument(s) and/or software within the budget narrative, as well as the expected impact on current and/or future assessment-planning efforts.
- **External consulting from disciplinary experts in assessment**
Grant recipients are responsible for making all arrangements with an outside facilitator or speaker as well as completing all appropriate paperwork for bringing in an independent contractor, following all University policies and procedures. Prior approval needs to be obtained before inviting someone to campus by initiating the appropriate paperwork via Michele Cole in Business Services. For more information, visit: <https://wmich.edu/business-services/>
- **Hourly student employment to assist with data collection and/or analysis**
(All students must follow the WMU Student Employee Work Hour Policy and cannot exceed the work hours stipulated in the policy. For more information: <https://wmich.edu/career/campus> and <https://wmich.edu/hr/officemanagement/student-resources>).
- **Faculty research time**
Faculty compensation **must include fringe benefits** and the total amount cannot exceed the \$2,200 maximum award. Please consult with the budget administrator for your program/unit to determine fringe percentages and more information about current policies. Prior approval following all university policies must be obtained before hiring any new employees, including students. Since assessment mini grant funding is internal to WMU, policies around compensation and employment apply for all funding that would be used to support faculty work time.
- **Assessment conference registrations and/or workshop attendance**
Within the budget narrative, provide description of and justification for how attendance will contribute to continuous improvement efforts and the expected impact on current and/or future assessment-planning efforts. Costs for registration only, travel costs will not be covered.

The award of funds is a contract between grant recipients and the university. All funds must be expended by the end of the fiscal year 2024 (June 30, 2024). Submit reimbursements requests to Cathe Murphy at cathe.murphy@wmich.edu by June 15, 2024. Deviations from the proposed use of funds must be approved by the Program Manager Assessment in advance of any change.

What the grant won't support

- Release time from assigned teaching or administrative responsibilities
- Costs of academic credit
- Direct compensation for staff who have assessment-related work as a part of their normal duties
- Computers or other technical equipment
- Travel costs
- Incentives for assessment research participation
- Refreshments or meals

Proposal process and due dates

Provide a written proposal that includes the following:

Cover Page and Abstract (1 page)

- Application date
- Principle investigator's (PI) name, title and contact information (email, phone)
- PI program name
- PI department
- PI college or division
- Co-PI/team member name(s), title(s), department(s), program(s) (if applicable)
- Title and abstract of your project (100 words or less)
- Signatures (electronic signatures are okay):
 - PI/team leader
 - CoPI(s)
 - Chair or Director (or other direct supervisor)

Narrative (6-page limit)

Narrative responses in the proposal should address the following:

- 1) Purpose of the project and goals** - Provide a clearly stated purpose and goals for the project. What do you intend to do; why is the project important? Describe the potential impact the project can have on student outcomes and success and how it could improve curriculum, pedagogy, learning and/or program delivery using assessment data. Be as specific and detailed as possible. Be sure to explicitly describe how the project addresses one or more of the 4 assessment areas described above under Focus:
 - Course or activity level learning outcomes assessment
 - Assessment methods
 - Alignment project
 - Program/unit level learning outcomes assessment.**6 points**
- 2) Methodology, activities and tasks** - Proposals should describe a project plan and timeline, and define the approach(es) that will be taken to work toward the intended purposes and goals. Include the sampling design, data collection and analysis methods (if applicable). Provide a clearly defined project timeline with intended dates for project start and completion and include description of the specific tasks and activities that will be completed and when, and how they align to the project purpose and goals. Share any other pertinent information. **6 points**
- 3) Sharing of Project Output/Results** - It is expected that at the end of the project, the final outcomes and/or results of the research project will be disseminated to others in the

department, program, unit and/or institution for the benefit of all. Proposals should describe a detailed plan for sharing and using the results with internal and/or external constituents. Dissemination of project results/products should include short-term, medium and long-term goals. **4 points**

4) Budget table (see example below)

- 5) Budget narrative (maximum award of \$2,200)** – Explain why the expenses are necessary and appropriate for completing the project. Describe materials that need to be purchased, student assistance, analytical assistance that may be required etc. Provide specific rationale and/or justification for all proposed purchases describing how the budget items align with and will help you to achieve your proposal purpose and objectives/goals. **4 points**

Sample budget

| Brief Description | Amount |
|---|--------|
| Assessment book: Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Write Effective Learning Objectives. The ABCDs of Writing Learning Objectives: A Basic Guide | \$15 |
| Hourly wage for graduate student to compile CLOs, mapping CLOs to PLOs and assigning values to CLOs based on Bloom's Taxonomy (\$12 X 120 hrs.) | \$1440 |
| Conference registration – IUPUI Assessment Institute (to present findings as a part of dissemination plan) | \$525 |
| | \$1980 |

See the [rubric](#) for more details about the scoring criteria.

Proposals should be submitted by **Monday, January 29, 2024** at 8 p.m. Eastern for priority review.

Recipients will be announced by **Friday, February 23, 2024**. Reconsideration will be given to the timing of applications and due dates in upcoming years.

Funds will be made available for awarded projects beginning **February 26 through June 30, 2024**, (pending signature of contract).

For questions about the mini grant program, contact Karen Stokes Chapo, Program Manager
Assessment: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu



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Office of
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Modeled (with permission) after the University of Northern Colorado Assessment Mini Grant Program.
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