# Classroom Mini-Grants

**Revised June 2024**

The Classroom Mini-Grant provides funds to an individual or a small team of current or full-time UTC faculty to create or improve targeted Engaged Learning Practices in their Undergraduate courses.

Proposals for these grants are for $500.00 or less. Funds must be used to directly aid in the teaching of a UTC undergraduate course, developing new engaged learning practices and innovative learning activities. Classroom Mini-Grants must be directly related to a specific undergraduate class that you are teaching during the current academic year.

The Classroom Mini-Grant application process is more streamlined than the process for larger High Impact Practices Grants, usually focusing on a singular purchase or more focused need for funding.

**Eligibility**

- All current full-time and part-time UTC faculty and staff are eligible to apply for Classroom Mini-Grants. Graduate teaching assistants may apply as secondary applicants.

**Classroom Mini-Grants Support**

- **Materials:** Engaged-learning class materials not covered by regular departmental funds, such as whiteboards for students, scratch-off cards, and manipulatives.
- **Broad and Connected Impact:** Preference is given to grant proposals that describe a use of funds that impacts a course in a broad and connected fashion, rather than a one-time moment or one-session event in a semester. Use of funds with speakers, for example, should involve student activities that follow-up and extend any one-time speaking event.
- **Seed Money:** Preference is also given to projects that can be considered "seed money" for efforts that might lead to future department support or external funding. The committee is less inclined to fund projects that look like they would be dependent on these grant funds in future semesters for longevity. In other words, these funds are **not intended to repetitively support projects in future semesters or iterations**.
- **Undergraduate Courses:** Only undergraduate course-related expenses are the intended focus for these grants.
- **Honoraria:** Funds can be used to support honoraria for guest presenters (non-UTC affiliated) and workshops. Funding may not, however, be used for a Department's seminar speaker series. However, to encourage grants that are "sustainable" (i.e., funds to support acquisitions which can be used again in future semesters), there is a restriction on one-time events for guest speakers and workshops per Department: the limit for these activities is $1,000 per semester. We encourage you to coordinate with your Department

Head and faculty when requesting your funds as this can impact a Department's overall requests.

- **Sustainable Materials:** A major, but not exclusive, consideration for grants is the acquisition of materials that can be used in future courses rather than one-time use. For this particular fund, the committee normally prefers at least 50% of the request be in the form of sustainable items.
- **Travel Expenses:** The fund supports travel for external educational partners and travel expenses for off-campus class visits. Note that this is for local and regional travel only. The fund does not support long distance or international travel.
- **Timely Applications:** The committee prefers to review proposals well in advance of their deployment. You are encouraged to apply early, rather than submit a proposal for something in process during the semester. You must use and fill out completely the appropriate Classroom Mini-Grant application form.

## Student Reflection Activity

Walker Center grants are intended not only to foster innovative teaching practices but also to prompt students to become more aware of what makes for successful learning. To this end, we ask that each grant include a Student Reflection Activity (normally graded) as part of the class's use of the funding. Here, we offer some guidelines regarding this activity:

- **Reflecting on the Learning Process:** The student reflection activity should strive for reflection on the learning process as such (meta-reflection) rather than on the content of the learning. While we do hope, of course, that the grant's funds are used to make the content more meaningful and engaging, we envision the three-stage reflection activity (see below) as an opportunity for students to gain insight into how learning works and how engaged learning makes the learning process more productive.
- **Three Stages of Reflection:** The grant proposal should describe and structure student reflection in three distinct stages, for example (1) with a **pre-activity reflection** on the possible learning outcomes or goals of the activity, (2) with an **in-process reflection** activity integrated into funded course innovation, and (3) with a **post-activity reflection** that compares and discerns insights that may not have been anticipated by the pre-activity reflection. Overall, student reflection on the learning process as such should be integral throughout and not left to the end.

## Limitations and Restrictions

- **Hardware:** The grant does not fund the purchase of technological hardware (computers, tablets, etc.)
- **Salary:** Funds cannot be used to pay UTC faculty, staff, or students.
- **Prizes and the Like:** Grant funds cannot be used for prizes, gift cards, contests, donations, food for events, or for Research Dialogues posters. (In-class poster projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis.)

- **Seminar Speaker Series:** Funds cannot be used for a Department's seminar speaker series.
- **Food Events:** The fund does not normally support food or beverages for events.
- **Augment Educational Program:** Funds must be used to augment the regular educational program, not to substitute funds or services that would otherwise be provided during the time-period in question.
- **Textbooks:** Funds cannot be used for the purchase of course textbooks.

## Grant Cycle

- **Rolling Applications:** Applications are accepted on a rolling basis with award notifications usually given within 10 working days of the date of the application.
- **Period of Use of Awards**: If a proposal is accepted for funding, all funds must be spent by the end of the semester of your award (fall, spring, or summer).

## Budget Requirements

- **Limit:** The funding limit for Classroom Mini-Grants is $500.00 or less.
- **Sustainable Items:** The budget must distinguish between sustainable items (usable in future semesters) and one-time use items.

## Reimbursement

- **Reimbursement Process:** The awardee must work with their department Administrative Assistant and the WCTL Administrative Assistant to handle invoices, receipts, and reimbursements. Purchases should be discussed with these Administrative Assistants in the event that university-connected vendors ought to be involved. The Walker Center will provide additional reimbursement guidelines upon the awarding of grants.
- **Reimbursement Limitations:** Note that students cannot be reimbursed directly for grant related expenses. These funds are only designed for grant awardees, through their departments, to handle expenses.

## Program Final Report Documentation

- **Final Report:** Grant recipients will be required to submit a final report. The due date for the final report submission will be based on the project's completion timeline, normally by the end of the semester in which the project is completed.
- **Failure to Submit Final Report:** If a final report is not submitted, the recipient forfeits the right to apply for a future WCTL Grant.
- **WCTL Grant Symposium:** Grant recipients are expected to participate in a WCTL Grant Symposium open to campus to highlight their innovations.

**Application Submission**

Proposals must be submitted using the Classroom Mini-Grant application form found on the WCTL Grant Website, including any required attachments.

Note that sometimes deadlines are jarred because of weekends and holidays, so please consult the WCTL website for those dates.