Request for Proposals

Undergraduate Experiential Learning Opportunities: Fall 2020 + IAP 2021

On July 7th, President Reif announced that MIT "will offer each student, whether remote or on-campus, a paid undergraduate research, teaching or service opportunity, with a stipend up to $1,900." The FAQ accompanying his email elaborated on this, explaining that "Recognizing that securing employment opportunities could be more difficult, MIT has developed remote research, public service, and teaching experiences that will provide every undergraduate student a guaranteed paid opportunity next year. These experiential learning opportunities will be available to every undergraduate student, whether remote or in-person, through programs such as UROP, UTOP, MISTI, PKG, Open Learning, or Sandbox."

The Institute has committed significant financial support to facilitate these undergraduate experiences. The current proposal process will make funding commitments to programs offering experiential learning opportunities in Fall 2020 and/or IAP 2021, as well as year-long experiences for first-year students. Separate funding cycles will be announced for Spring 2021 program funding and for students wishing to propose their own project or experience.

More specifics are included below.

CRITERIA

Institute funding is available to support student opportunities that meet most of the following criteria:

1. **Hands-on/Applied Approach**: opportunity to apply learning in a real-world context
2. **Rigorous Academic Content/Focus**: clear learning outcomes that connect to and advance MIT educational pathways and students' professional aspirations
3. **Dedicated and Expert Guidance/Advising/Supervision**: frequent, supportive, and constructively critical feedback from faculty sponsors, graduate student mentors, experienced staff members of an external partner organization, etc.
4. **Meaningful Intensity and Duration**: students should dedicate at least 80 hours (e.g., 8 hours/week for 10 weeks) and up to a maximum of 140 hours (e.g., 10 hours/week for 14 weeks) to their project
5. **Reflection and Evaluation**: critical reflection is intentionally incorporated into the project or opportunity; plan to measure the program's effectiveness (in terms of student learning, community impact, etc.)

Special consideration will be given to:
- Projects designed for or focused specifically on **first-year students**. Projects for first-year students should emphasize exploration and community-building and are therefore conducive to cohort-based opportunities (5-10 students) with significant training, mentoring, and professional development components. First-year-focused opportunities may involve fewer hours per week and span multiple terms (fall + IAP or fall + spring) to limit student workload during their first semester.
- Projects with a focus on **social change** (e.g., COVID response, racial justice, climate change).

FUNDING

For Students:
- Students are eligible to earn up to $1900 for these opportunities. This may take the form of a stipend or an hourly wage at the discretion of the sponsoring program.
- The hourly wage will be capped at $13.00/hour from September 1 through December 31, 2020; this will increase to $13.50 on January 1, 2021 (consistent with the increase in Massachusetts' minimum wage). Programs wishing to pay higher wages or stipends will need to arrange to do so from their own funding sources.
- These positions will count towards the maximum of 20 hours per week that undergraduate students can work for pay.

For Program Capacity and Other Expenses:
- Programs are expected to contribute to the costs of these opportunities as they are able and should estimate funds available to be leveraged in the budget request section of their proposal.
- Modest funds may be available to support non-student expenses, such as program capacity (e.g., temporary staffing required to design or administer a program); supplies, equipment, or postage costs (e.g., for shipping kits to students at home); or other expenses.
- These non-student expenses should not exceed 10% of the total request.

PROJECT PERIOD

- Experiences may take place during the Fall semester and/or IAP. A separate funding process for Spring opportunities will be announced later in the Fall semester.
- IAP may be a standalone project period or serve as a "tail" for Fall experiences (allowing students additional time to complete projects started in the Fall) or as a running start for Spring semester projects.

STUDENT TRACKING

- We will keep records of student participation in eligible opportunities to avoid duplication and allow us to reach out to students who have not yet participated. The exact process is to be determined, but we will require the cooperation of participating programs as we develop and implement this system.

REMOTE INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- For remote students working outside the US, projects must be reviewed for compliance and regulatory requirements relating to remote foreign appointments, including specific foreign country rules. For more information, see the FAQ.

Proposal Format

Please keep your submissions brief; 2-3 pages should suffice for a typical proposal. Please include the following elements in your proposal:

1. Describe opportunities to be created/offered and outline how the proposed program meets the criteria above. Explain which students will be eligible and/or what qualifications and experience will be required of student applicants (e.g., first-years only; Course 6 majors; prior teaching experience necessary).
2. Estimate the number of opportunities to be created or offered and the average cost per student.
3. Detailed budget request including:
   a. Direct student support: wage (maximum hourly wage is $13/hour through 12/31/20 and $13.50 effective 1/1/21) or stipend equivalent based on an hourly rate; please specify a preference for wage or stipend
   b. Non-student costs (no more than 10% of total request) such as:
      i. Program capacity: training workshop fees, temporary staffing, etc.
      ii. Supplies and equipment: kits to mail to students' homes; t-shirts; etc.
   c. Include an estimate of any funds that you are able to leverage from other internal or external sources
4. Some indication or estimate (if possible) of expected Spring 2021 opportunities and needs

Proposal Deadline

Proposals are due no later than 5 pm on Wednesday, July 22. Please email completed proposals to Kate Trimble, Senior Associate Dean and Director of the Office of Experiential Learning, at ktrimble@mit.edu.

An ad hoc funding committee composed of staff, faculty, and students will review all proposals. Funding award decisions will be announced no later than Thursday, July 30.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Kate Trimble at ktrimble@mit.edu or (401) 527-0201.