

## **Application Guidelines for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Grants**

**March 13, 2020**

*Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI) – University of Victoria*

### **Table of Contents**

#### SoTL Grant in a Nutshell

- Purpose of the SoTL Grant
- Eligibility for a SoTL Grant
- Project Funding for SoTL Grants
- Ethical Approval Requirements
- SoTL Grant Application Date Deadline

#### SoTL Proposal Application Requirements

- Range of Proposals
- General Criteria for SoTL Grants
- Application Process
- SoTL Budget and Accounting Requirements
- Eligible and Ineligible Expenses
- Proposal Assistance
- SoTL Grant Application Guide – Questions and Examples

#### SoTL Proposal Adjudication

- Criteria
- Process

#### SoTL Grant Awardees

- Ethical Approval for the SoTL Project
- SoTL Grant Awardee Commitments
- SoTL Grant Progress Report
- Project Completion and Final Report

Prior to applying for a grant in support of teaching and learning, please review [Overview of UVic Grants Supporting Teaching and Learning](#). The following application guidelines are specific to grant applications seeking support for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

## SoTL Grant in a Nutshell

### Purposes of the SoTL Grant

The Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI) provides Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grants that are designed to foster empirical research on the impact of teaching practices on student learning, and that serve to support an interactive community of scholars exploring improvements in teaching and learning.

### Eligibility for a SoTL Grant

The LTSI encourages proposals from those who directly support student learning and the student experience at UVic, including research-stream and teaching-stream faculty, sessional lecturers, teaching assistants, librarians, laboratory instructors, academic program directors, instructional designers, and student affairs professionals. The LTSI particularly encourages proposals from early-career professionals or those new to UVic. Note that previous recipients of the SoTL Grant are eligible to apply. However, any previous LTSI grant recipient who has not fulfilled the obligations of their grant (reporting, etc.) must complete those obligations prior to consideration for another LTSI grant.

### Project Funding for SoTL Grants

The LTSI limits SoTL grant funding for any project to a maximum of **\$6,000**. The intent behind this limit is to distribute financial support across meritorious proposals (preferably in a diversity of faculties and divisions) in order to maximize direct benefits to a wide range of student learners.

### Ethical Approval Requirements

The UVic Human Research Ethics Board (UVic HREB) must approve the conducting of any research involving human participants (see **Ethical Approval for the SoTL Project** below). However, prior ethical approval is not required at the time of application.

### SoTL Grant Application Date Deadline

The LTSI will consider only complete SoTL applications that are received prior to **11:59 PM on TBD**. We will notify all applicants of the adjudication decision by email no later than **TBD**.

## SoTL Grant Application Requirements

### Range of Proposals

The adjudication panel for the SoTL grants will consider any proposal that investigates factors that influence student learning, with preference given to those projects that demonstrate potential for significant large-scale or long-term impact. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Projects designed to improve, or enhance student learning within the context of a particular course or a program as well as projects that will expand opportunities for student success within a type of course (seminar, lecture, laboratory, *etc.*) or a program.
- Cross-cutting initiatives that address significant themes, such as enhancing student/faculty interaction; supporting diversity; increasing indigenous and international inclusivity; encouraging success in writing, qualitative and quantitative skills; or engaging students in undergraduate research and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

### General Criteria for SoTL Grants

SoTL grants support empirical research on the impact of pedagogical innovations on achieved student learning outcomes. We evaluate grant proposals based on the clarity and specificity of the research question, the methodology and the project's feasibility and sustainability within the timeframe and budget presented. The grant adjudication panel will pay close attention to the number of students directly impacted. We expect applicants to be familiar with other scholarly work that pertains to, or informs, their proposed project; such familiarity should be clearly reflected in the proposal.

### Application Process

The LTSI will consider only complete SoTL applications that are received prior to **11:59 PM on TBD**. We will notify all applicants of the adjudication decision by email no later than **TBD**.

Following are the steps in the application process:

1. Download the [SoTL Grant application form](#).
2. Complete the SoTL Grant application form. (Please note the word limit for each item.)
3. Include all requested signatures. (Information is available on using [digital signatures](#) in MS Word.) If you use a physical signature, submit the electronic copy without signature, **and** send a signed e-copy of page one of the application form to the [LTSI](#).
4. Rename the completed Word document **<Surname\_of\_Applicant\_First\_Name\_SoTLGrant\_TBD20.doc>** (e.g., Doe\_Jane\_SoTLGrant\_TBD20.doc) and send it to the [LTSI](#). We will accept applications only **electronically** in **Word document** format. Note that we will **not** accept applications in .pdf format.

## SoTL Budget and Accounting Requirements

The application form requires that the applicant's immediate supervisor indicate support for the project by a signature on the application. If the proposal is approved, the LTSI will ask the administrative officer of the applicant's home unit to assign to the principal investigator a distinct account to be used solely for approved budget items related to the grant. The LTSI will have viewing privileges on the account to monitor expenditures. The LTSI will transfer funding to the newly created account only after the LTSI receives an e-copy of the ethical approval from the university Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) or a copy of the email from HREB indicating that the research is judged not to require ethical approval (see below: **SoTL Grant Awardee Responsibilities - Ethical Approval for the SoTL Project**).

SoTL grants normally expire on March 31<sup>st</sup> the second year after the grant is approved. For example, a grant approved in May 2020 would expire on March 31, 2022. On the expiry date of the grant or when the funds have been expended, whichever occurs first, the LTSI will notify the primary applicant's unit to freeze the account so that no more spending can be incurred. On expiry, the remaining funds will be returned to the LTSI for redistribution in future competitions. Any deficits are the responsibility of the awardee and their unit. If a project should require more time, it would be necessary to contact the [LTSI Director of Curriculum Renewal and Strategic Priorities](#) to request approval of an extension.

**Funds used for items other than those listed in the approved application budget must be preapproved by the LTSI.**

## Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Applicants may propose using SoTL grant funds to pay students or other research assistants but must adhere to all university policies and procedures, including those pertaining to wage rates, vacation pay, and appropriate benefits. Please consult the [Human Resources CUPE 4163 salary schedule](#), click on (Component 1 & 2) TA Appendix. Note that vacation pay of 4% is computed on the wage rate and that benefits pay of 10% is computed on the wage rate + vacation pay.<sup>1</sup> **Please confirm pay rates with Human Resources to assure that you have current values.**

Applicants and co-applicants **may not** use SoTL grant funds for the following:

- X To be reimbursed for work related to the grant or to cover course release funding. (There might be rare exceptions, however. In approved exceptional cases the grant will fund up to a maximum of \$3,000 for teaching release time.) Individuals who hope to be hired on the grant as, for example, a research assistant, should **not** be listed as the applicant or a co-applicant.
- X To purchase equipment or supplies normally supplied by the university.
- X To use commercial services. If the proposal involves using an outside consultant, the copyright to any "product" remains the property of UVic. Contact the LTSI if you have further questions on this issue.
- X To cover costs of academic work, such as journal subscriptions.
- X To cover costs of registration for, or travel to, academic conferences.

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, a graduate student serving as a senior assistant (CUPE 4163) after April 1, 2020 and before September 1, 2020 would have a wage rate of \$26.57. The 4% vacation pay would increase the wage cost to \$27.63 ( $\$1.06 * \$26.57$ ), and the 10% benefits would increase the wage cost to \$30.39 ( $\$2.76 * \$27.63$ ).

## Proposal Assistance

We recommend that you receive consultation on your proposal well in advance of the proposal deadline. The LTSI will be offering two sessions ahead of the submission deadline, to assist you and to answer general questions:

- **Overview of LTSI Grants in Support of Learning and Teaching**  
This session is a general overview of the LTSI grants. The session is designed to help potential applicants decide which grant is most appropriate and to answer questions.  
**TBD, HHB 128**
- **Applying for a SoTL Grant**  
This session will go through the SoTL Grant Guidelines and Application Form to answer questions of potential SoTL Grant applicants.  
**TBD, HHB 128**

Individual consultations are also available. Contact the [LTSI](#), 250-721-8571, for an appointment. Depending on the nature of the project, the LTSI may recommend consultation with other campus partners, such as the Library, Student Affairs, University Systems or the LTSI's Technology Integrated Learning.

### SoTL Grant Application Guide – Questions and Examples

Please use the most recent [SoTL Grant application form](#) that is available on the website.

### Questions to consider for SoTL grant proposals

While formulating your proposal, consider the following questions:

1. ***What is your motivating inquiry question?*** What is it that you want to learn about the student experience or student learning in your course or program? What is motivating you to ask this question? What is the context for your question? The LTSI adjudication panel recommends that your inquiry question be **specific, rather than general**, and that the specific question clearly links with the proposed intervention. (See Too General and Specific examples below.)

#### ***Inquiry Question Examples***

Too General: *How can I help students to better understand the concepts of “gendered space” and “public/private space” in my first-year geography course?*

Specific: *Will a group project assignment involving direct observation in the field facilitate students’ application of the concepts of “gendered space” and “public/private space” to novel contexts?*

Too General: *How can I increase the quality of student class presentations?*

Specific: *Will completing a self-help module on the effective use of presentation software improve the engagement/discussion of the class during student class presentations?*

Too General: *How can I encourage my students to come to class better prepared?*

Specific: *Will daily, start-of-class “1-minute papers” and brief peer-to-peer discussions increase students’ class preparation, attendance, and classroom engagement?*

Too General: *How can I motivate my Engineering students to work through end-of-chapter problems?*

Specific: *Would increases to the proportion of class marks assigned to weekly homework problem sets change the likelihood that Engineering students would work on end-of-chapter problems? And, what impact would this marking change have on examination performance?*

Note that the more specific inquiry questions refer directly to student intended learning outcomes and specific factors that may impact these outcomes. Also note that questions starting with “Will” and “Would” tend to be more specific and answerable.

2. ***What are your desired student intended learning outcomes?*** List the affected intended learning outcomes for your course/program or relevant section(s) of your course/program. If your project is approved and funded, what changes might result in the learning of your students? Which intended learning outcomes might better be achieved by the successful implementation of your SoTL intervention? The more clearly and specifically you describe these intended learning outcomes, the more likely the adjudication committee will be able to appreciate the value of your project. (See General and Specific examples below.)

#### ***Intended Learning Outcome Examples***

Too General: *After participating in a group project, students will be able to better understand and use concepts of space.*

Specific: *After participating in a group project assignment involving direct field observations, students will be more likely to recognize and apply space concepts within novel contexts.*

Too General: *Following instruction, students will be able to give high quality presentations.*

Specific: *After completing the self-help module on using presentation software, students will engage in more discussion during student in-class presentations.*

3. ***What do we already know (either in your own discipline or from other disciplines) that might help with your inquiry question?*** It is important to survey the field before beginning an inquiry. What does the literature say about how others have dealt with your question, your intended learning outcomes, or related issues? Does the literature suggest validated methods or strategies? Be sure to list complete references to cited sources (not subject to word limit).

#### ***Literature Example Questions to Answer***

- *What does the literature tell us about experiential learning and application of knowledge?*

- *What properties of presentations influence student engagement and discussion?*
- *What does the literature tell us about start-of-class exercises?*

4. ***How do you propose to find out the answer(s) to your question?*** Provide a brief description of your proposed research design and methods. Will you implement an idea from elsewhere or from an innovation that you have developed? Will there be a control group or control condition with which to compare the impact of your intervention? If you are using a control group, how will you address ethical issues of denying the treatment to them? How will you measure the impact on student engagement, learning, or success? Will you be using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed measures? How will you analyze your data?

***Example of Method (for Geography example proposal)***

*Students will have two group projects, one involving direct observation field work, and the other comprised solely of library research. For the first project (topic: “gendered space”), one half of the students will be asked to do library research in small groups and collaborate on writing a report. The other half of the students will do library research and additionally engage in direct observation in the field, and then collaborate on writing up their empirical findings. For the second group project (topic: “public/private space”) the students will swap methods. Those who did the literature-only research for the first project will now do literature research and a field observation, and those who earlier did the field observation will be asked to do a literature research. The final examination for the course will include two questions that involve applying the concepts of “gendered space” and “public/private space” in novel contexts. Performance on these essay items will be compared to see if the method of instruction (library research or experiential + library research) impacted the generality of the concepts to a novel problem.*

5. ***How will the project improve the active learning and engagement of students targeted by the proposed project?*** Describe briefly your reasoning on how the planned intervention will result in improved active learning and engagement.

***Example of active learning and engagement (from Geography example proposal)***

*Our reasoning is that having students engage in direct observation and engagement in the field will necessarily increase active learning over the traditional lecture format.*

6. ***How will the project improve the congruence of student learning outcomes, course activities, assignments, and assessments of student learning?*** Describe briefly your reasoning on how the planned intervention will improve alignment.

***Example of alignment (from Geography example proposal)***

*The course intended learning outcomes specify that the student will apply learned concepts to novel problems and situations. We reason that providing students with an opportunity to collect data in the field will broaden the scope of their experience beyond that achievable with textual and lecture information alone. The intervention will improve the alignment of the learning outcomes and the course activities, and if successful, suggest ways to improve*

*the alignment of assessments with learning outcomes, a possible follow-up SoTL investigation.*

7. **How will you make your work accessible?** Describe how you will share your findings with colleagues or help others to apply findings to their own context? The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, like other areas of scholarship, involves communicating results. Most disciplines have journals devoted to, or open to, articles on teaching and learning. Similarly, disciplinary conferences often support presentations on scholarly approaches to teaching and the scholarship of teaching and learning. In addition, there are organizations devoted to the sharing of exactly this kind of research on teaching and learning (e.g., [Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#)).

#### **Sharing Findings Examples**

- *We will share the results of the study with departmental colleagues at our annual teaching retreat.*
  - *We will submit significant findings for presentation at discipline-specific professional conferences.*
  - *We will share our findings with departmental colleagues at our monthly research seminar series.*
  - *Since our department does not normally provide opportunities for the sharing of colleagues' research, we will request that the LTSI assist us in offering a workshop through the LTSI.*
  - *We plan to share the results of our study with campus-wide colleagues at the annual Let's Talk About Teaching coordinated by the LTSI.*
8. **How will the project budget be spent?** Describe exactly how much will be allocated to each specified item (e.g., who will be doing what? For how long? How many supplies (and of what kind) will be needed?) An important consideration is the sustainability of the project. Continuation of the project in post-grant years should not be dependent on continued grant funding. For example, if the proposed project were to seek funding to support a Teaching Assistant (TA) integral to the successful operation of the target course, the adjudication panel would need to know how funding for the TA would be sustainable after completion of the grant.

#### **Budget Examples**

- *One graduate student will be hired at \$30.39 per hour for 40 hours to help analyze the data from the focus groups. Total pay will include 4% vacation pay and **compounded** 10% benefits ( $\$30.39 \times 40 = \$1,215.60$ ).*
- *A graduate research assistant will travel to the field teaching site (250 km round trip) four times. Travel will be reimbursed at the standard UVic rate for use of personal vehicle of \$0.51/km ( $\$0.51 \times 1000 = \$510.00$ ). This expense will not recur in future offerings of the program.*
- *The research assistant is needed for the initial design of course modules and monitoring of students' reaction to the redesigned course elements. These RA activities will not be*

*needed in subsequent offerings of the redesigned course. The redesigned course will be sustainable without additional outside support.*

9. **What, if any, additional help with your project might you like from the LTSI or other campus partners?** Often the expertise you are looking for is available at UVic, and the LTSI (as a clearinghouse for ideas) is a useful place to go for assistance, advice, and referral.

**Help Examples**

- *How do I conduct a focus group?*
- *What electronic survey tools are available that conform to university standards?*
- *What alternatives are there to doing research with large groups of participants?*
- *Who else is grappling with questions about the ways students experience lecture classes?*

So that we may allocate appropriate consultative resources, please consult with the LTSI prior to submitting your application if your project will entail requesting LTSI assistance.

10. **What else, if anything, should the adjudication panel understand concerning this proposal?** Are there other issues, problems, or knowledge that you would like to share with the adjudication panel that would help them to fully appreciate your proposal?

## **SoTL Proposal Adjudication**

After the proposal deadline of 11:59 PM on **TBD**, the LTSI screens all complete applications to ensure that the proposals meet the basic criteria for the SoTL grant. If the LTSI concludes that a proposal is a better fit for one of the other teaching and learning grants, the principal investigator will be contacted prior to final adjudication.

The LTSI adjudication panel competitively evaluates proposals for a SoTL grant on the basis of the quality of the research question, the feasibility of the methodology to answer the research question, the potential contribution of the research to the improvement of pedagogy, budget, sustainability, and the potential impact on the learning of UVic students.

Successful SoTL proposals will have a:

- well-considered, specific inquiry question or questions that focus on the student experience and conditions for enhancing learning;
- set of clear goals articulated in terms of intended student learning outcomes;
- brief, targeted review of the relevant literature;
- plan for gathering data that will shed new light on the inquiry question;
- well-articulated plan describing how the project's impact on student success will be assessed;
- description of the significance of the project in terms of contributions to teaching and student learning;

- clear plan for disseminating the findings to appropriate audiences; and
- sustainable budget with justification for each item.

An adjudication panel, composed of volunteer faculty and staff of the university, reviews the proposals prior to the adjudication meeting and rates each proposal on the aforementioned criteria. Adjudicators also make qualitative comments on exceptional or problematic features of proposals. The proposals are discussed and ranked. Proposed budgets are sometimes modified.

Prior to **TBD**, the LTSI will notify the principal applicant of the panel’s decision and any recommendations for modification.

## **SoTL Grant Awardee Responsibilities**

### **Ethical Approval for the SoTL Project**

Since most SoTL projects will involve students and/or instructors as participants in the inquiry, such projects will require ethical approval as part of the research implementation process. Note, however, that **prior ethical approval is not required at the time of application**. To help you determine if a formal ethical review of your project is required, we urge you to go to the UVic [Human Research Ethics website](#) and carefully consider the information. In particular, see the “Who should apply?” and the “FAQ” information on the page. Allow up to six weeks for the completion of the formal ethical review process. **Please use the [online ethics form](#).**

Suggestion: Although not required, we recommend that you consult directly with [Human Research Ethics](#) before submitting your proposal to the LTSI. They will help you to determine whether there might be any challenge to the implementation of your research project from an ethical perspective.

Following notification of applicants as to the decision of the adjudication panel, a workshop on UVic Human Research Ethics for SoTL grant recipients will be offered to those less familiar with human research ethical practices or to those with ethics-related questions:

- **TBD, HHB 128**

### **SoTL Grant Awardee Commitments**

A primary goal of SoTL grants is to create an expanding community of multi-disciplinary researchers engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning and sharing their experiences to inspire others through their SoTL leadership. We hope to build on the successes and lessons learned in this ongoing initiative to inform the broader scholarly community at UVic and to support the development of scholarly research on teaching and learning. Accordingly, we ask successful SoTL applicants to **commit** to do the following:

- participate in one of two identical 2.5 hour intensive workshops on Constructing Effective Statements of Intended Learning Outcomes with other successful grant applicants:
  - **TBD, HHB 128**
  - or
  - **TBD, HHB 128**
- participate in a Welcome and Fall Update session with SoTL grant recipients to share research questions, methods, and progress:
  - **TBD, HHB 128**
- participate in a Spring Update session with SoTL grant recipients to share research questions, methods, and progress:
  - **TBD, HHB 128**

If Primary Applicants are unable to attend any of these events, they should inform the LTSI of a designate to represent the grant. Please hold these dates in your calendar.

### **SoTL Grant Progress Report**

Successful grant recipients will complete a brief [Progress Report](#) by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the year following receipt of the grant, regardless of whether or not the project has been completed. For example, if a grant were awarded in May 2020, the Progress Report would be due March 31, 2021. When submitting a Progress Report, applicants must include their detailed budget showing all to-date expenditures in Canadian funds.

### **Project Completion and Final Report**

Grant recipients will normally complete their projects by March 31<sup>st</sup> of the second year from the time of their grant approval. For example, a proposal approved in May 2020 would have funding until March 31, 2022 or project completion, whichever occurs first. The Final Report provides researchers an opportunity to share their research findings with colleagues. The [Final Report](#) should include your research question, a very brief review of the literature to put the inquiry into context, methodology description adapted from your application, and a brief presentation and discussion of your results. You must also include a separate budget sheet describing expenditure details.

The LTSI may invite successful applicants to take part in a local (virtual or in-person) event to disseminate their findings (such as a showcase, conference, panel, speaker series, or workshop). One such event is the annual Let's Talk About Teaching (LTAT), held each August. The LTSI expects successful applicants to share their project results with their departmental colleagues. If the grant recipient's department were not to provide opportunities for sharing research, the LTSI would be happy to assist in organizing an event in their department or at the LTSI (see Application Question #7).