The University of Essex’s Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) has been supporting staff to develop their teaching and support of learning in creative and innovative ways since 1998. To date the fund has supported more than 100 initiatives right across the University.

TALIF’s core purpose is to support individual staff who want develop new approaches to their teaching with small amounts of ‘seed corn’ funding. In this way it complements the institutional character of the Education Strategy Fund, from which grants are available to drive forward departmental / sectional level initiatives in support of the University’s Education Strategy and associated action plans.

TALIF is currently worth £26,000 per annum. Any member of staff with teaching and learning support responsibilities may apply for funding, up to a maximum of £5,000 per grant. Students are welcome to apply (with appropriate academic sponsorship) and each year £1,000 may be reserved to fund a student-led project.

In short, TALIF exists to help individual colleagues develop into the best educators they can be and to support the personal engagement of all members of our academic community, including our students, with the University’s mission to deliver education excellence.

## Purposes

TALIF is designed:

- to support individual engagement with the University’s core commitment to excellence in education;
- to develop a strong culture of innovation in teaching and the support of learning as widely as possible amongst University staff;
- to ground the development of our education provision in relevant action research or work-based scholarship;
- to facilitate active reflection on and dissemination of best practice across and beyond the University;
- to encourage innovation and effectiveness in the use of new and existing teaching methods and learning technologies;
- to aid the development of rich and stimulating learning environments for both staff and students;
- to enrich the student learning experience by increasing student participation in, and encouraging student ownership of, key aspects of teaching and learning development and delivery (including but not limited to feedback and evaluation);
- to maximize the realization of students’ academic potential and their graduate capabilities (employability).

Applications for funding can be made to support innovation in any field of teaching and learning practice. However, they are particularly encouraged in the following areas which are central to the University’s Education Strategy:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Research in the curriculum</th>
<th>Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integration of students into research communities</td>
<td>Living and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing students as active researchers</td>
<td>Harnessing the power of diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research-Led Education</td>
<td>External engagement</td>
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<td>e.g. Curriculum design and development; distinctive teaching methods and assessment modes; capstone projects</td>
<td>e.g. Developing co- and extra-curricular opportunities; developing support that maximizes talent; using the diversity of the University as a resource in teaching and learning; interdisciplinary opportunities; community engagement</td>
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Engagement

- Active engagement in partnership
  e.g. Student-centred learning initiatives; collaboration with students; staff development opportunities for all

Learning environment

- Learning environments that promote excellence in education
  e.g. Development of holistic approaches to teaching (including formal teaching, independent study, peer-assisted and technology enhanced learning); staff development and support; aligning learning environments with educational vision; developing knowledge of scholarship of teaching and learning
- Developing both staff and facilities

Applicants will be asked to talk about how what they plan to do fits with University and departmental/section priorities in broad ways.

Eligibility to apply

- Any member of staff of the University with teaching and/or learning support responsibilities may apply for project funding;
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students may apply for a £1,000 award with the endorsement of an appropriate academic sponsor;
- Proposals from applicants who have gained recognition at any level (D1-D4) with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) are particularly encouraged.

Criteria

To be successful, an application must show that the project is likely to:

- Be realistic and purposeful in terms of scale, timeline and methodology
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of student learning and/or engagement at the University
- Deliver materials, conclusions experience, or other direct benefit to the teaching and learning support of the applicant’s department or section, and/or to the University in general;
- Be broadly compatible with the teaching and learning objectives of the department / section and the University's Education Strategy
- Involve students in its design, delivery and evaluation;
- Be demonstrably original within their departmental context
- Be beyond normal departmental resources
- Include robust evaluation, for example, by surveys before and after the project;
- Have outcomes that can be usefully be disseminated within the University and (if relevant) beyond
- Have potential for sustainability and scalability

The decision-making process

There is usually one funding round per year. The call for applications will be open during the Autumn term, and decisions on which projects to fund will normally be made before Christmas.

Each proposal will be considered by the TALIF panel, which is made up of the Deputy Deans (Education), the Associate Dean of Academic Partnerships and the Learning and Development TALIF manager, according to the above criteria.

Award letters and associated terms and conditions will be sent to the applicant as soon as possible after the panel meeting. Applicants should respond to the offer of funding, acknowledging their acceptance of attached terms and conditions, within a month of receipt. Project accounts will be opened by the HR accountant and then administered by the applicant’s Faculty Accountant.
Rules for spending

Money may be used for:

- Buying out teaching or other identifiable elements of working time to release applicants to work on the project;
- Attendance at training courses or relevant conferences;
- Travel (standard class only and appropriate to the project);
- Employment of research assistants, students or other project workers including the funding of incentives for student involvement;
- Administrative/clerical support;
- Materials and equipment (hardware and software). (Requests for equipment must clearly demonstrate that they are necessary for the development of the project and that they are highly likely to continue to benefit the learning environment in which the project is undertaken (i.e. not personal laptops, etc.));
- Other learning resources;
- Dissemination costs (e.g. organization of seminars, websites, etc.);
- Other purposes approved by the TALIF panel.

Money may not be used for:

- Materials and equipment intended solely for the personal use of project leaders (e.g. laptops);
- Payment of permanent, full-time staff for work that they would normally be expected to do.

Please note that any funding awarded must be claimed during the time-scale of the project and according to the original application. Project funding cannot be deferred except for in exceptional circumstances (e.g. applicant illness). Any funds remaining at the end of the project will be returned to TALIF for redistribution.

Please also note that project funding is provided on the understanding that project managers communicate the outcomes of their work – see ‘Evaluation and Outcomes’ below – at the end of the project.

Evaluation and Outcomes

All award holders are asked to:

- Submit a short report – in the form of a blog post for In Practice – summarizing the project, highlighting key findings, noting student responses, and outlining any future development plans, within one month of completion of their project. The information contained in this report will also be used to feed back to departments / faculties and appropriate university committees, etc. on education developments on-going in the University. It may also be used as the basis of a case-study entry on the TALIF webpage. If the project is scheduled to last for more than six months, project managers are asked to report on progress to Learning and Development at the half-way point.
- Supply a full financial statement of expenditures and remaining balance to your Faculty Accountant at the project’s end;
- Take part in a Learning and Development Education Good Practice or Networking event following the conclusion of their project;
- Be available to colleagues to provide advice on the preparation of similar bids or matters relating to the funded project. (Learning and Development will help facilitate this kind of mentoring.);

Contacts and further information

Learning and Development TALIF contact: Dr Ruth Windscheffel
T 4724 / 4402
E rowind@essex.ac.uk / eta-talif@essex.ac.uk

Address for completed forms: TALIF
Learning and Development
4SB.5.4, University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
E eta-talif@essex.ac.uk

There will be a drop-in information session for TALIF on Thursday 8 October 2015 between 12.30pm and 2.30pm in 4SA.6.19 (HR Training Room). Simply come along if you are interested. If you miss this session, please contact eta-talif to arrange a short meeting about your idea.
# Application completion guidance notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Summary</strong></td>
<td>Title, duration and requested funding for project. Note that projects are not expected to last more than 12 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicant</strong></td>
<td>Please tell us about everyone who will be involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Contributors</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Project Overview** | In this summary you should outline what you hope to achieve by developing your idea or innovation, identifying the specific problem or area of learning, teaching and/or assessment that the project will address.  
(Please be aware that it will be read by assessors who are outside your discipline area and that it may be used for TALIF publicity purposes.) |
| **Project Details** | **Scale, timeline and methodology**  
Describe your intended project and its learning and teaching rationale. Please include, within this section, a timetable detailing the different phases of the project.  
**Impact on quality and effectiveness of teaching**  
How will the project enhance the experience of students? How many students will be affected by the project and what do you think might be the short and long term expected impacts?  
**Outputs which will benefit department / section / university directly**  
These may include teaching and learning resources including software; advice and guidance on approaches to teaching and potential learning frameworks.  
**Broader relevance**  
Give a broad indication in this section how your project supports the University’s [Education Strategy](#) and the teaching and learning priorities of your department/faculty/section (i.e. what is the need for the development within your department/school/section or discipline, and how will it successfully meet that need?).  
**Student involvement**  
All applicants are encouraged to consider how to involve students in the planning and/or implementation of their projects.  
**Innovation and originality**  
Clearly explain here how your project is original / innovative in the context of your department rather than in absolute terms.  
**Project evaluation**  
In this section you are asked to provide details of how you will evaluate and assess the project’s enhancement of learning and teaching. (This may involve regular evaluation meetings, feedback from an external source, surveys, activity logs, etc. Areas to address may include: checking whether the project has been delivered on time; whether the outputs have been met or changed; the level of student involvement; whether the student experience has significantly changed and/or improved; whether the project ran to budget and whether the outcomes and outputs are sustainable.) |
Dissemination plans
How do you envisage disseminating project outcomes within and without the University? Please note that all TALIF project managers are asked to submit a blog post to In Practice, contribute to a central development event and actively share their findings within their department/section.

Project maintenance and scalability
Applicants are asked to consider how the project might be continued beyond the funded period. (Questions you might address here include: how might the project be sustained after the funding and core project activity have ceased? Could the project be developed further? How will it be maintained? Please include suggestions for further take-up / transferability within and beyond your department/school/section.)

Project Costings
You should seek advice from your Faculty Accountant and, if appropriate, from the Research and Enterprise Office on compiling your proposed project costings.

Faculty Accountant Check and Endorsement
Your Faculty Accountant should check your costings and sign your form.

Applicant Signature and Declaration
Sign, date and check the terms and conditions box.

Notes

Please note:

1. The 2015-16 call for applications for TALIF will open on will open on Monday 5 October 2015. The closing date for complete applications (including comments by the Director of Education or Head of Department/School/Section and signature of Faculty Accountant) is Friday 27 November 2015 at 5pm. No applications will be accepted after this date.

2. One signed hardcopy (delivered to Learning and Development 4SB.5.4) and one electronic copy (emailed to eta-talif@essex.ac.uk) must be received by this time.

3. Please type throughout.

4. Please do not add any appendices or extra material; applications with these attached will not be accepted.