Frequently Asked Questions

2015 Tier One Program (TOP): Integration of Multidisciplinary Research and Creative Activities into the Learning Experience

1. Where can I find the call for proposals and other documents for the Tier One Program?

The Call for Proposals is online at: http://dof.tamu.edu/top_call_for_proposals

The Participant Cover Sheet can be found at: http://dof.tamu.edu/top_cover_sheet

The submission portal can be found at: https://dofportal.tamu.edu/top

2. What are the relevant dates and deadlines for this year’s grant cycle?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 10, 2015</td>
<td>Deadline to submit complete proposals for review and approval by department heads and deans. All proposed faculty contributing to any project must also upload a three-page CV, including a teaching philosophy statement, a research interests statement, academic appointment history, selected awards and recognitions, selected funded research, selected peer review articles, list of courses taught in the last two years and their corresponding overall student-teaching evaluations (average per course).*</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 14, 2015</td>
<td>Deadline for department heads to communicate approval or non-approval of completed proposals via TOP portal. All proposals must be reviewed by the heads of all involved departments before they can be approved or rejected by the participating college deans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17, 2015</td>
<td>Deadline for deans to communicate approval or rejection of proposals. Approved proposals will be automatically sent to the Office of the Dean of Faculties for processing.</td>
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3. How much budget detail is required?

Enough to give the reviewers a good idea of how the money will be spent (e.g., salaries, equipment, incidentals, materials, consulting, software, travel, etc.). Small items can be bundled without itemizing, but big expenses need to be itemized. The committee will most likely evaluate whether the expense is justified.

4. What documentation is needed from the deans of the collaborators’ colleges?

All that is needed from the college is the approval and agreement of commitment from the dean through the TOP portal.

5. Do all faculty members need to be listed as either a PI or co-PI?

It is important to know who is participating in the project as well as the level of commitment and role of everyone listed. How you define PI or co-PI is up to those involved in the project—normally the PI is the individual responsible for generating the idea, coordinating the collaborations, filling gaps, administering the project, etc. There can be more than one PI if individuals are equally responsible and invested.

6. If one or more faculty members are listed as “collaborators,” would that be viewed as less favorable or less competitive during the evaluations of proposed projects?

You can list people as collaborators if you so desire—the title given to the individuals who participate in the project will have an impact on how the project is rated. What is important is that the role of each individual is clearly stated and that each individual is committed to do what their role describes.

7. In addition, if “collaborators” listed on the proposed project represent two other colleges is it important to list them as official co-PIs rather than “collaborators,” on record to indicate the PIs and co-PIs represent multiple colleges? Does the PI/co-PI versus “collaborator” distinctions make a significant difference in the evaluations of proposed projects?
The title given to involved parties is less important than describing the role each player will play. It is possible that the committee will award a higher score to a project that is truly interdisciplinary than to a project that is disciplinary but offers a different experience to students from other colleges. Remember that several other factors are also considered, such as viability, richness of the experience, impact, etc.

8. One of our faculty members is out of town at the moment, and I will not be able to easily get a completed and signed “Participant Cover Sheet” from them and their department head and dean by the upcoming deadline.

They can upload a digitally signed copy to the submission portal, or a department head can sign on their behalf until they return.

9. How do I submit the proposals?

All proposal submissions will be handled through the TOP submission portal: https://dofportal.tamu.edu/top

10. Can the project be intended for online delivery?

No restrictions have been given as to the nature of the “experience beyond the classroom.” However, your proposal may be better suited for a Core Curriculum Technology Enhancement Grant. More information on these grants is available at: http://its.tamu.edu/Help___Training/Core_Curriculum_Technology_Enhancement_Grant_Program.php

11. Can money from these grants be used to pay salaries? If so, whose salaries?

Yes. Funds can be used to pay anyone’s salary, but all salaries must be justified in the approved budget

12. Can moneys be used to buy and or repair equipment? If so who owns the equipment?

Yes. The equipment expenditures and ownership of new equipment must be outlined and justified in the proposal and budget.
13. Is there a minimum amount/percentage of matching support required from the colleges?

No, but if there are matching commitments from the college(s), they must be clearly listed in the proposal.

14. Will programs that involve participation of graduate students receive greater scores?

No. The program is for the enhancement of undergraduate and graduate education, and the participation of graduate students does not give more weight to a given proposal.

15. Can there be multiple PIs (those with a primary and essential role) and co-PIs (those with supporting or enabling roles)?

Yes, but the duties for each of the PIs/co-PIs should be included in the proposal.

16. Does each college review ALL of the proposals that have some of their faculty participating?

All participating deans must approve each of the proposals that include any of their faculty.

And if so, does each college then decide which proposals will or will not be approved?

Yes

Example: Can we refuse to approve a proposal from a department from a different college?

Deans are able to approve or disapprove any proposal that involves faculty from their college. However, after disapproval a proposal may be resubmitted without the involvement of the disapproving college.

17. Does each college only review those proposals with PIs from their own college?

Each dean is responsible for approving any proposals involving their faculty.

18. Is there a limit on how many proposals are allowed from each college?

No. However, the evaluation committee can take into consideration university-wide representativeness to select the winners, but not at the expense of sacrificing quality.
19. The deadline for deans to approve proposals on the TOP portal is April 30. Given that multiple colleges may be reviewing the same proposals and voting, is there a date by which the college level reviews should be completed?

The deans will receive an automated reminder to either approve or disapprove their faculty’s proposals before the deadline. Deans are encouraged to act on proposals quickly in order to give PIs/co-PIs time to make adjustments to disapproved proposals.