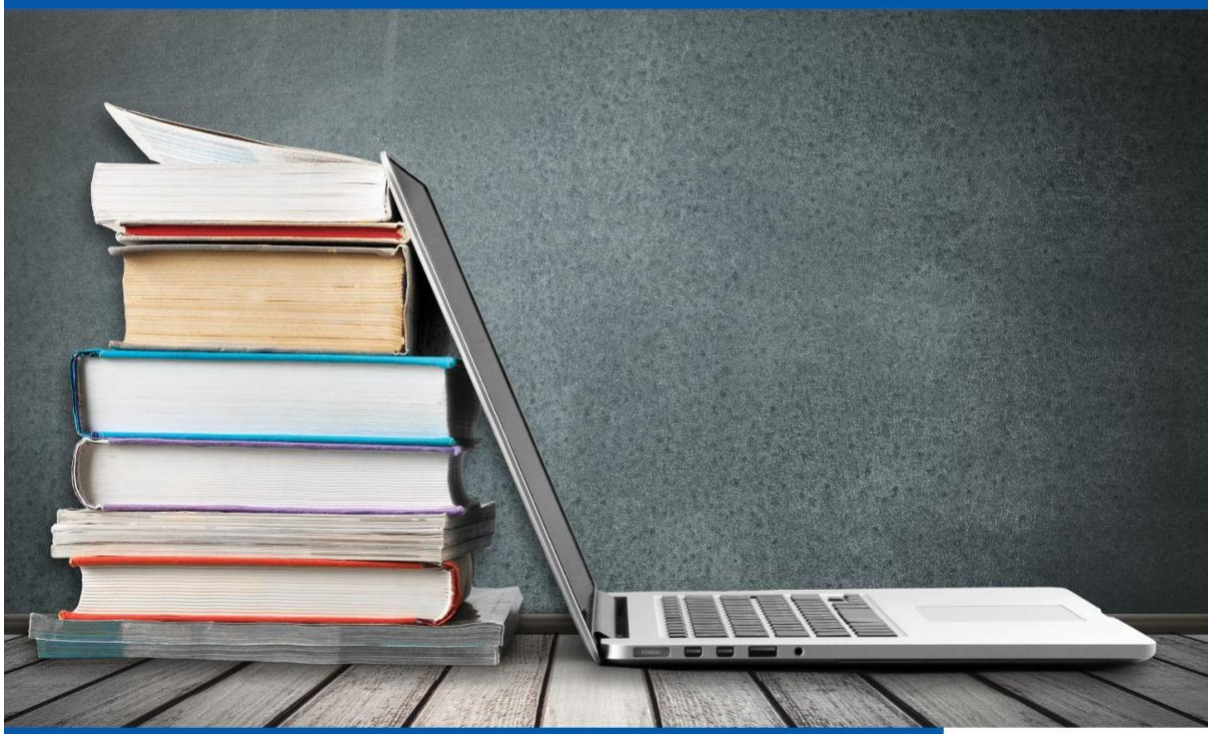
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning @UP



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Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the University of Pretoria (UP)

Procedure for the application for a one-year SoTL grant

Defining SoTL at UP

At UP, Scholarship of Learning and Teaching (SoTL) is defined as combining education research with educational practice and interventions to understand how teaching at the institution can benefit students' learning and develop a more accurate understanding of learning. SoTL research benefits the UP community by informing scholarly-based best teaching practice, increasing research outputs, and advancing innovation in teaching that is contextualised for the UP, as well as the South African higher education environment more broadly.

Aims and scope

The aims and scope of SoTL at UP are:

- To advance scholarly teaching at an institutional level.
- To provide opportunities for UP staff to implement innovation in teaching and learning.
- To contribute to knowledge development and dissemination in the field of disciplinary teaching and learning.
- To advance reflective practice.
- To share good teaching practice.

Types of SoTL projects

In 2024, you can apply for two types of SoTL grants. The first is the SoTL research grant which is similar to the SoTL grants that were awarded in previous years. The purpose of the SoTL research grant is knowledge production and publication output. The second is the SoTL innovative project grant. The purpose of an innovative project grant is to design and implement research-informed teaching practices.

Criteria for SoTL research grant

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be considered for a SoTL research grant:

- Researchers must comply with UP's policies about ethical standards for human-subjects and animal-subjects research to ensure that all research is conducted ethically. The Research Ethics Committee administers ethics applications and approvals for research. Ethical clearance must be obtained before data is collected as part of any SoTL project.

- The research activity should be founded on and originate in critical reflection. The research may be disciplinary or interdisciplinary and should be methodologically sound.
- The object and focus of a study should be inquiry focused on student learning, i.e. the understanding, defining and describing of teaching and learning phenomena to maximise learning in UP as defined above.
- SoTL should address some of UP's teaching and learning needs or intentionally refine existing products and outputs that would benefit UP directly or indirectly. (See the suggested topics list in the next section)
- SoTL may also address an experiment or new research on teaching and learning at UP.
- The information that is gained should be publicly shared for critique and/or be available for use by the institution at large, as a product (e.g., a conference presentation, book chapter, or article) or educational resource.
- All SoTL-funded research projects must be presented at the annual Flexible Futures Conference.

Criteria for SoTL innovative project grant

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be considered for a SoTL innovative project grant:

- The project should address a UP teaching and learning need and/or ultimately be focused on student learning and success.
- The project outcomes should at least be shared within a community of practice of SoTL grantees but could also be shared at a conference.
- The project must be implemented in the year that the grant money is awarded.

Suggested topics

Suggested topics for 2024 SoTL projects are:

- Teaching and learning in a hybrid/hyflex environment
- AI and learner analytics to support teaching and learning
- Educational technology to facilitate learning
- Innovative assessment to support student success
- Fostering student engagement in hybrid and online teaching
- Instilling life-long learning skills through expeditionary/ self-directed learning
- Effective teaching and learning in large class teaching
- Transdisciplinary teaching and learning in higher education
- Curriculum renewal and transformation (including alignment with graduate attributes)

How to apply for SoTL funding

- Consider the list of topics provided on the current trends in teaching and learning in higher education and choose a topic that you would like to do research on.
- Peruse Addendum A (How to write a SoTL proposal).
- Complete the SoTL application form **here** by **15 January 2024**.
- When completing the application form, also consider the SoTL research rubric or the innovation project rubric that will be used to evaluate applications to ensure that your project complies with the required standards.
- If you require guidance with completing your application, please contact the Education Consultant allocated to your faculty. We are happy to help! You can find a list of Education Consultants and their contact details here.

Process of awarding SoTL grants

- SoTL projects will be reviewed by a delegated team of reviewers. Applications will be considered on merit.
- A holistic approach is followed that considers the overall quality of the application (see the rubric for Research grant or rubric for innovation project). An application will be categorised based on the descriptions that best describe the overall application. Reasons for decisions may be mentioned in the comments section of the rubric.
- Applicants will be informed of the outcome by **February 2024**.
- Funds for approved applications will be transferred into a special cost centre linked to the DHET UCDG cost centre for each individual.

Process after receiving a SoTL grant

- SoTL grant recipients work on their projects (by collecting data, implementing interventions, developing resources, etc.) independently or in a team.
- Two Community of Practice sessions will be available for SoTL grant recipients (both research grant and innovative project grant recipients) to attend, during which they will have an opportunity to share their progress and get feedback from other SoTL grant recipients as well as education specialists. Final dates will be communicated to grant recipients in 2024.
- SoTL **research grant** recipients present their research (or research progress) at the Flexible Futures Conference.
- The process concludes at the end of November 2024 (UCDP report requirement).
- Upon conclusion of the process, funds received for the project must be spent, and a short close-out report must be submitted.

Notes

1. A maximum of R20 000 can be awarded per research grant and a maximum of R10 000 per innovative project grant.

2. No funds will be paid into a recipient's personal development or research fund as the expenditure cannot then be tracked for audit purposes.
3. No funds can be transferred to the next year.
4. International conferences: only registration fees will be considered.
5. National conferences: registration and travel/accommodation costs will be considered.
6. Conference presentations must be SoTL-related.
7. Hardware/ equipment will not be funded.
8. Only one application per person will be considered (**choose one stream to apply in and only submit one application**). If multiple applications are submitted, only the first application will be considered.
9. Only one project per person will be considered. Do not bundle several projects into one application. Note that no more than the maximum amount will be awarded per application (R20 000 for a research grant or R10 000 for an innovation project).
10. Applicants who have not received a grant in the last three years will receive preference.
11. Applications related to PhD or other postgraduate studies will not be considered.
12. If instructions of the application process are not followed, the application will not be considered.
13. Applicants must be permanently employed at the University of Pretoria.

Take note of the following information from the UCDP:

The UCDG cannot be used to fund:

• Normal costs of programme and course design and delivery.
• General infrastructure and equipment. Only equipment linked to a pilot can be allowed and this should be on a small scale. The university should show what plans are in place to scale up the pilot if it proves to be viable.
• Scholarships for students who are not staff members of the university.
• Payment for researchers employed/paid to do research to boost the research profile of the university or appointment of post-doctoral fellows.
• Any activities that should be funded as part of the university's core business costs.
• Monetary incentives to students and staff for participation in the projects.

Addendum A

Completing your SoTL research grant application

General tips

- Ensure you understand all the requirements (refer to the criteria and rubric that will be used to evaluate applications)
- Start early: Keep sufficient time to draft the proposal and complete the necessary formalities required in the application process.
- If you have any queries during the application process, feel free to ask for assistance from your Education Consultant (see Education Consultant contact details here).
- Write a clear and convincing proposal: Write clearly and persuasively. Write only what is important and mention the facts that strengthen your research. Write the proposal to convey the necessary information to the reader so they can understand your project proposal.
- Bring in innovative ideas and elements to the project.
- Use data and facts to support your research.
- Avoid jargon and technical language: Use simple, easy-to-understand language throughout the proposal.
- Get the proposal reviewed by your colleagues and revise it.
- Avoid plagiarism.
- Note that if all the instructions are not followed or any part of the application form is not completed, the application will not be considered.

Proposal components

SECTION A - Description of the project and applicants

Project title
Type in your project title.

Rationale/Project description (500 words maximum)
Briefly describe the reasoning behind your research question. Explain why your research question is important and how you plan to answer it. This should include your overall objective, as well as ideas around the class/course/program or group of students you would like to work with, how many students would be ideal (your research sample), what course(s) the project will take place in, and any variables you may want to include within the project.

Email address
Type in your UP email address

Title
Type in your title

Name
Type in your first name

Surname
Type in your surname

Current position/ designation
Type in your current position/ designation

Department/ School
Type in your department or school

Faculty
Select from dropdown list

Additional applicant(s)/researcher(s)
Name, email address, position, faculty, department, school (if applicable, otherwise leave blank)

Grant type
Select grant type (SoTL research grant)

SECTION B - SoTL research grant: measuring success and sustainability (research plan)

This section focuses on your research plan.

Research question/Hypothesis
State your initial question(s) or innovation proposal and your initial thoughts about the potential outcome. What improvement in student learning will occur as a result of your investigation? What do you hope the outcome will be? Why do you think your proposed solution will positively impact student learning?

Research method & research design (maximum 500 words)
Tell us how you would like to conduct your project. Consider these questions to help guide you: How will you be testing your question and hypothesis in the classroom? Will you be looking at feedback collected from students, results on assessments, or your own observations? How long should it take to complete? Will it be based around individual students, small/medium groups, or the class as a whole?

Ethical considerations
Attach proof of ethical clearance obtained (if applicable) or, alternatively, attach a summary of ethical considerations you will include in your ethical clearance application.

Resources required

Tell us about any resources that may be required for the study. This may include new educational technology, a new learning tool, or perhaps revision of a tool already used. This would have to be added to the cost calculations (please keep these notes in mind when completing this section).

List of foreseen risks and challenges and how they will be addressed
List possible risks and how you will mitigate these risks.

Detailed budget
This is where you attach a budget with a breakdown of the project's cost and include the total of the grant. Remember also to include the cost for resources required (please keep these notes in mind when completing this section). Without a detailed budget, your application cannot be considered (Maximum total of R20 000).

Total amount requested
Type in only the total amount you are requesting (maximum R20 000).

SECTION C - Literature/Works reviewed and referenced (500 words maximum)
This section should provide the supportive information you may have used in completing this proposal and any literature you may have reviewed in your initial research into your question or hypothesis. Please use the Harvard/APA referencing format. **Note that this section requires a summary of the relevant literature and not only a reference list.**

Completing your SoTL innovation project application

General tips

- Ensure you understand all the requirements (refer to the criteria and rubric that will be used to evaluate applications)
- Start early: Keep sufficient time to draft the proposal and complete the necessary formalities required in the application process.
- If you have any queries during the application process, feel free to ask for assistance from your Education Consultant (see Education Consultant contact details here).
- Be clear about what you want to do with your intended project, how you will spend the money allocated, and how it will benefit teaching and learning at UP.
- Bring in innovative ideas and elements to the project.
- Avoid jargon and technical language: Use simple, easy-to-understand language throughout the application.
- Get the application reviewed by your colleagues and revise it.
- Note that if all the instructions are not followed or any part of the application form is not completed, the application will not be considered.

SECTION A - Description of the project and applicants

Project title
Type in your project title.

Rationale/Project description (500 words maximum)
Briefly describe the reasoning behind your research question. Explain why your research question is important and how you plan to answer it. This should include your overall objective, as well as ideas around the class/course/program or group of students you would like to work with, how many students would be ideal (your research sample), what course(s) the project will take place in, and any variables you may want to include within the project.

Email address
Type in your UP email address

Title
Type in your title
Name
Type in your first name

Surname
Type in your surname

Current position/ designation
Type in your current position/ designation

Department/ School

Type in your department or school

Faculty
Select from dropdown list

Additional applicant(s)/researcher(s)
Name, email address, position, faculty, department, school (if applicable, otherwise leave blank)

Grant type
Select grant type (SoTL innovative project grant)

Resources required
Tell us about any resources that may be required for the study. This may include new educational technology, a new learning tool, or perhaps revision of a tool already used. This would have to be added to the cost calculations (please keep these notes in mind when completing this section).

Detailed budget
This is where you attach a budget with a breakdown of the project's cost and include the total of the grant. Remember also to include the cost for resources required (please keep these notes in mind when completing this section). Without a detailed budget, your application cannot be considered (Maximum total of R10 000).

Total amount requested
Type in only the total amount you are requesting (maximum R10 000).

Project timeline
Attach a document (Word, PDF, or Excel) with a timeline of your project from start to finish.

Motivate how your project will benefit teaching and learning at UP (maximum 500 words)
Explain the value of your project particularly focusing on how your project will contribute to teaching and learning at UP.