

## Faculty Improvement Grants

The Faculty Improvement Grant is designed to provide funding for faculty members to improve performance in the following areas: (1) Teaching, (2) Scholarly or Creative Activity, (3) Continuing Preparation and Study, (4) Contributions to Student Growth and Development, and (5) Service to the University and Community.

### About the Grant

Grants are awarded to pursue, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Workshops, institutes, seminars, symposia, and/or other interactive activities
- Course work
- Observations
- Self-designed learning activities

Faculty Improvement Grants are not intended to replace professional study and travel funds provided to faculty members through other contractual agreements. The grants are not intended to be used for participation in regularly scheduled (i.e., annual, biannual, etc.) conferences, even if an individual is presenting a paper at such a conference. Although the committee recognizes the value of such professional activities, funds are not available to support the recurring professional conferences that all faculty members can identify related to their disciplines. Examples of other items that Faculty Improvement Grants do not support are items such as books, journals, software, or any equipment.

Faculty Improvement Grants support workshops, institutes, or one-time short courses that involve substantial, direct participation by all those enrolled. Such learning experiences are characterized by a concentrated examination of a topic. In the case of pre-conference or post-conference workshops that involve supplementary registration fees, Faculty Improvement Grants can be used for such fees as well as additional expenses for meals and lodging that the participant would incur by arriving early or leaving late in order to attend the workshop. Faculty Improvement Grants are not used for conference registration or travel, or for travel to pre- or post conference workshops if the conference is being attended.

Faculty Improvement Grants can be used to pay tuition for graduate degrees, including dissertation credits. However, the grants will not pay for other expenses incurred in dissertation preparation or for funding for travel, meals, or lodging costs related to graduate study. This restriction includes travel to consult with advisors, defend the dissertation, or take comprehensive examinations. Faculty Improvement Grants can also be used to pay tuition for other collegiate or training courses.

### Eligibility

All faculty, except adjunct faculty, are eligible to apply for funding through the Faculty Improvement Grant. Fixed-term faculty are not eligible to receive Faculty Improvement Grants during their final term of employment. A full time faculty member may be awarded a maximum of \$2,500 over a four year period. For part-time faculty members, the \$2,500 amount shall be adjusted pro-rata. Faculty Improvement Grants are competitive. Funding for individual applicants may be adjusted due to availability of funds and the number of eligible applicants in any funding cycle. Applicants who have previously been awarded Faculty Improvement Grants should email Warren Sandmann in Academic Affairs to determine the amount for which they are eligible [warren.sandmann@mnsu.edu](mailto:warren.sandmann@mnsu.edu) .

## Deadlines

There are two FIG review cycles per year, with deadlines in mid-October and mid-March. Applications must indicate that they were received in the office of the appropriate dean on or before the date of the deadline.

## Application Process

- Applicants should provide fully completed application forms with descriptions of proposed activities to the Dean of their college or unit director.
- Applicants should include a written statement describing and justifying their activity. **The statement should not exceed eight pages.** The written statement should include a clear description of the proposed activity and timeline of when events will take place. Applications will be read by committee members unfamiliar with the applicant's discipline. Clarity and completeness of the description of the activity is critical. The statement should also explain how the proposed activity will affect their performance in any of these five areas: (1) Teaching, (2) Scholarly or Creative Activity, (3) Continuing Preparation and Study, (4) Contributions to Student Growth and Development, and (5) Service to the University and Community.
- Applicants must use the attached Budget Sheet and provide documentation/source of costs. Specific details about dates of study or travel and costs being requested from this FIG must be provided.
- Information describing the workshop or institute showing costs should be attached to the application, with the pertinent section circled or starred. (Do not highlight as applications will be photocopied.)
- Requests for course tuition payment should include documentation of number of credits to be taken, costs per credit, and dates of the term when credits will be earned. Attach a copy of the fee statement or other supporting documentation.
- **Applications must be received before the event occurs.** No application will be considered if the application is received in the appropriate dean's office after participation in the activity. Please be aware that if faculty submit an application and attend an event before being notified of funding, they may be responsible for expenses if the grant is not approved.

## Review Process

Academic Affairs will make copies of applications to distribute to members of the Faculty Improvement Grant sub-committee. Committee members will individually review applications using the Faculty Improvement Grant Evaluation Form posted below. After reviewing the applications the members will convene to make recommendations to Academic Affairs. Recommendations will be made based on clarity of the proposal and justification of its impact on improvement in any of the five areas listed above. Some preference will also be given to those who have not been awarded grants within the last seven years.

## Award Information

- Grant recipients agree to return to Minnesota State University, Mankato for one semester following the grant period. If the recipient does not return to MSU, the grant shall be repaid in full upon separation of service.
- Following the grant period, each grant recipient shall submit a follow-up report to the Office of Academic Affairs describing the activities supported by the Faculty Improvement Grant. Reports will be posted to the Academic Affairs Faculty Improvement Grant website. (See the website linked through the Academic Affairs home page.)

- The deadline for submission of expenses is within **5 days** after completion of the project for which the improvement grant was awarded, except for expenditures in the last month of the fiscal year which must be processed according to State of Minnesota guidelines. Claims submitted later may not be honored. There may be tax implications (see timely submission link at <http://www.mnsu.edu/busoff/travel/news/051208.html>.)
- Expenditures beyond the award will not be reimbursed through the Faculty Improvement grant.
- The State of Minnesota guidelines for lodging, meals, and transportation will be observed, with the exception that transportation expenses are limited to \$800. See expense reimbursement link <http://www.mnsu.edu/busoff/travel/expensereimburse/ifo.html>.
- When a grant is awarded, an individual cost center will be created for the applicant. Academic Affairs will include this cost center in the award letter. This cost center should be used on reimbursement forms when the applicant is submitting their receipts to Academic Affairs.

## FACULTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT EVALUATION FORM

FIG Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please score and provide rationale for each of the following categories. Please circle the number which best describes your opinion (unless otherwise directed). Base your answers on this scale: 0 = Low, 1 = Fairly low, 2 = Medium, 3 = Fairly High, 4 = High;

### 1. Purpose of the Activity

Purpose relates to activities supported by Faculty Improvement Grants (workshops, institutes, or one-time short courses, tuition for graduate degrees or other collegiate or training courses, observations, or self-designed learning activities).	Yes	No	
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### 2. Description of the Activity

	Points				
	Low				High
Description of the proposed activity is clear, concise, and complete.	0	1	2	3	4
Timeline of activity events is clear, complete and logical.	0	1	2	3	4
Description includes a clear and complete statement of how the proposed activity will affect their performance in at least one of the five areas: (1) Teaching (2) Scholarly or Creative Activity (3) Continuing Preparation and Study (4) Contributions to Student Growth and Development (5) Service to the University and Community	0	1	2	3	4
Description includes a clear and complete statement of how the proposed activity will benefit	<b>Low</b>				<b>High</b>
a) the applicant	0	1	2	3	4
b) the department and/or instructional program	0	1	2	3	4
c) the University	0	1	2	3	4
Supporting materials (brochures, documentation of self-directed activities) are included which clarify and explain the planned activity.	<b>Low</b>				<b>High</b>
	0	1	2	3	4

### 3. Budget

\_\_\_\_\_ **Points**

Budget items clearly support FIG activities and are reasonable and appropriate.	<b>Low</b> 0	1	2	3	<b>High</b> 4
Budget includes specific details about dates of study or travel and costs being requested.	<b>Low</b> 0	1	2	3	<b>High</b> 4
Documentation of costs supports the proposed budget. For tuition, a fee statement is included. Course tuition requests also include documentation of number of credits to be taken, costs per credit, and dates of the term when credits will be earned.	<b>Low</b> 0	1	2	3	<b>High</b> 4
Budget conforms to FIG guidelines.	<b>Low</b> 0	1	2	3	<b>High</b> 4

### 4. Overall Project Evaluation

\_\_\_\_\_ **Points**

The application is readable, well-organized, grammatically correct, and understandable.	<b>Low</b> 0	1	2	3	<b>High</b> 4
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**Overall Proposal: Which of the following three categories do you feel this project falls into?**

**A** Should be funded

**B** Possibly funded

**C** Not funded

Total Points\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Total Points may be referred to in the committee's deliberations of proposals of equal merit.