

DIGITAL EDUCATION INCUBATOR

Call for Project Proposals

Adaptive learning technologies; gamification; 21st century skills; immersive learning; learning analytics; redesigning learning spaces; expanding access, equity and digital fluency ... In seeking to advance cultures of innovative thinking, we want to collaborate with you to align BU with emergent trends in educational innovation.

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We fund and co-manage pilot projects that have the potential to positively change the way in which one or more of BU's Schools and Colleges deliver value to students, both inside and outside the classroom. Our aspiration is to incubate projects that have lasting impact on how we do things at BU and position our university in the forefront of educational innovation.

The structure of our funded projects and related activities can take many forms. We are deliberately flexible in our approach, valuing bold initiative, collaboration and the transformative potential of thoughtful ideation.

Below, we have identified key areas that are currently impacted by rapid transformation and bold visions for the future of learning. We are also always interested in discussing *any* ideas that seek to align Boston University with emergent trends in educational innovation to improve the student experience.

For upcoming deadlines and information sessions, please see our [calendar](#) and [project pitch submission form](#).

For additional information, please contact dei@bu.edu.

Current Focus Areas

Project-Based and Work-Integrated Learning

Our students expect BU to prepare them for gainful employment through meaningful learning experiences and skill-development. To align with these expectations, emerging learner-centered pedagogical approaches focus on interaction, groupwork and solutions to real-life challenges. Technology plays a key role in the implementation of these approaches through cloud-based services, apps, and other digital tools that promote persistent connectivity enabling students, educators and other project collaborators to access and contribute to shared workspaces anytime, anywhere.

We are particularly interested in supporting creative uses of technology that facilitate connections between faculty/student teams and outside organizations (corporations, public agencies, etc.) for the purposes of project-based, experiential and work-integrated learning embedded in courses and programs of study.

Mentoring and Advising

In a complex world, effective student mentoring and advising are emerging as an increasingly important component of the University student experience. Developmental models of advising focus not only on student learning and educational experiences but seek to connect students' academic interests and skills with their personal and career ambitions.

In the spirit of improving the quality of academic, career and life mentoring/advising we offer to our students, DEI seeks to support the innovative use of digital tools or digitally-enabled processes in the context of advising. Examples of such tools include (but are not limited to) self-assessments & goal-setting exercises, predictive analytics, academic alert & nudge systems, digital guided pathways, flipped advising models and more.

Lifelong Learning & The Future of Work

The growing cost of education. Rapidly changing job markets. The emergence of "academic boot camps," coding camps and nano-degrees. Stackable certificates and digital badging.

Lifelong learning is education for the knowledge economy. Agile learners aim for continuous personal and professional development throughout their lifetime, pragmatically connecting learning to practice, and embracing the evolving nature of the skills required to succeed in the workforce. We know that many students want to accelerate their degree programs and be reassured that the skills they've obtained ensure a competitive advantage for career success.

We seek to support innovative approaches to developing capabilities for serving lifelong learners, including (but not limited to) ideas for lifelong learning portals, and developing new/better ways to keep our alumni connected to BU. We are also interested in receiving proposals for pilot projects involving alternative credentials, such as digital badges, and new credit pathways such as MicroMasters.

Emerging Educational Technologies

We support the use or exploration of new and emerging technologies that are not currently in use at BU or that could lend themselves to cutting-edge applications and/or further alignment with BU's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Projects in this area could range from virtual and augmented reality, uses of artificial intelligence and gameful learning to novel uses of wearable technologies, robotics and complex digital visualizations.

Proposal Review and Development Process

Generation of Concepts

- Throughout the academic year, the DEI will hold information sessions designed to walk interested participants through key elements of the project proposal and answer any questions about project development process. [Please see calendar and RSVP form.](#)
- Those not able to attend the information sessions, but interested in a consultation before submitting a proposal, can direct questions to dei@bu.edu and an Incubator staff member

will respond within 2 weeks. Please describe your idea/experiment, the need/gap it seeks to address, and the intended outcomes for BU students.

Submission Guidelines

Concept proposals can be submitted [via our site](#) at any time. Initial concept pages should aim to be about 2 pages in length and address the selection criteria below in as much as possible.

Proposals selected to move to further discussion and potential development will be notified within six weeks of submission date.

Selection Criteria

- *Scope:* The proposed project is responsive to one of the current focus areas outlined above or otherwise seeks to align BU with emergent trends in educational innovation to improve the student experience. It describes a proposed experiment/idea, including a problem statement and a possible high-level project vision.
- *Significance:* The proposed project has significant value for our students. Ideally, there is evidence of support for the proposed idea, such as market demand or availability gap
- *Strategic Value:* The proposed project has the potential of creating a strategic advantage for BU and/or enhance the distinctive value of a BU education.
- *Sustainability:* The proposed project has a) a plan for measuring its success, b) a plan for project evaluation and sustainability, and c) the potential to scale beyond a pilot phase to other classrooms, units, departments and/or schools, either directly or through providing a compelling example for adoption.
- *Support:* The proposed project is strongly endorsed by participating academic unit(s), and all requisite technical and administrative support have been identified and deemed feasible; academic units commit to supporting the project past its incubation phase if deemed successful.

Development

- For proposals meeting the Selection Criteria, appropriate staff/support personnel will collaborate with the proposing individual/team to assess project feasibility and to identify possible resources needed for implementation (such as investigation of possible software or platform needs, infrastructure and support staff requirements, budget for seed funding, and timeline to implementation).
- Following the above step, select concept proposals will be co-developed into project development plans, including implementation and evaluation milestones, for funding and incubation. If initial discussions regarding the feasibility of the project reveal that the concept proposal is missing significant key elements, such as an assessment of market demand or sustainability plan, we will encourage the concept's continued development for consideration at a later date.
- **Please note that proposals for additions and modifications to Boston University's academic programs are subject to eCAP review.**

Funding & Implementation

- Both the funding and timing of project implementation depends on the scale and requirement of the proposed idea.
- Ideally, a proposed project will launch within 6 months of the proposal date, with a review of outcomes within a year of launch.
- Funding for our previous projects has ranged from \$5K for a single small-scale project to \$200K for a multi-year, large scale implementation effort.

CFP Calendar

Information Sessions

October 8, 2019	10:00 AM – 11:30 AM	Zoom Webinar
October 29, 2019	2:00 PM – 3:30 PM	141 Bay State Road, Rm 104
November 19, 2019	11:00 AM – 12:30 PM	141 Bay State Road, Rm 104
December 3, 2019	3:00 PM – 4:30 PM	Zoom Webinar

Submission deadline: **January 20, 2020**

Contact Info

Email: dei@bu.edu **Phone:** 617-358-8606 **Website:** <https://digital.bu.edu/incubator/>