Student AIF FAQs

This Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document provides clarification about the Student Academic Innovation Fund (AIF) and common questions applicants may have about the fund.

What is the Student Academic Innovation Fund?

Established in 2019, the Student Academic Innovation Fund gives University of Michigan students access to financial support from the Center for Academic Innovation. The Student AIF facilitates the creation, growth, and research of engaged and inclusive educational experiences.

Who is eligible for funding?

If you are a current University of Michigan-Ann Arbor undergraduate or graduate student, then you are eligible to submit a proposal.

What items are eligible for funding?

- Research participant compensation
- Consultant fees or compensation for contract work (i.e., paying a developer to build an application or a graphic designer to create promotional materials)
- Project-related equipment and technical supplies (i.e., laptops, cameras, computers, projectors, databases, server costs)*
- Certain conference/event hosting expenses (i.e., technology fees, speaker compensation)
- Printing or other promotional needs (i.e., reports, posters, flyers, etc.)
- Software licensing
- Postage (i.e., sending equipment for a conference, competition, presentation, etc. or sending invitations for an event)
- Rentals (i.e., equipment)
- Academic journal publication or service fees

Note that due to COVID-19 the University's guidance on what expenses are allowed to be funded sometimes changes. CAI will review requests for funding as they come in and communicate potential limitations as more information is learned from the University.

If your potential project requires an expense not listed above, you can email aif-proposals@umich.edu with specific questions regarding it.

*Note, these supplies must be returned to CAI after your project is complete.

If my proposal is accepted, what level of involvement can I expect from Academic Innovation?

Although awards are mainly financial in nature, AI will meet with you and/or your team to work out logistics, expectations, and answer your questions. You will be introduced to essential contacts for purchasing, marketing, and all other AIF related questions.

Unfortunately, AI staff members are not available for ongoing consultative work with students as part of a proposal. If, after reviewing the sample proposals and FAQs, you still have questions about certain aspects of your proposal prior to its submission, we are happy to respond via email at aif-proposals@umich.edu.

Do we need to have a budget?

Yes, you're required to include a detailed budget as part of your final application. If you're applying for funding from multiple sources, please submit a budget that thoroughly outlines the items specifically being requested from the Center for Academic Innovation. Our budget form is here.

How many times can we request funding?

You can only submit (or be a part of) one proposal per application cycle. However, you may submit or resubmit a proposal in future application cycles.

What is the process for submitting a proposal?
1. Review this sample proposal and eligible funding items.*
2. Complete the proposal
3. For the DEI section, please refer to the University's DEI goals
4. Complete the budget form, to specify your cost estimates.
5. Email your proposal to aif-proposals@umich.edu by the end of day on the given deadline.
6. Watch for an email confirmation that your proposal was received.

*Note, this is not an inclusive list of all eligible funding items.

When can I expect my request to be reviewed, and when can I expect to hear a decision?

The Student AIF Committee has 30 calendar days after the application deadline to review all completed proposals, make decisions, and notify applicants of their final decision.

How many awards are given out?

We support multiple student-driven projects over the course of the year. The number of proposals we approve depends on the combined cost of all submissions relative to available funding.

Is there anything expected of recipients after their project is complete?

Yes. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire so we can share your story on the CAI blog.