Institute for Innovative Teaching and Learning

Education Innovation Fund (EIF)

Guidelines for Applicants

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Description and Purpose

The Education Innovation Fund (EIF) of the Institute for Innovative Teaching and Learning (I²TL) at the University of Luxembourg aims to foster transformative educational innovation by funding ambitious pedagogical initiatives and collaborations. The EIF seeks proposals that are innovative, strategically designed, and specifically targeted to significantly enhance student learning outcomes, enrich curriculum development, advance teaching methodologies across various disciplines, and actively involve students as integral partners and co-creators.

Initiatives supported by the EIF must clearly align with at least one of the following core objectives:

1. **Pedagogical Innovation**: Initiatives introducing innovative, student-centred pedagogies, immersive and experiential learning activities, interdisciplinary course designs, or advanced assessment and feedback methodologies that elevate the quality and impact of teaching.

2. **Interdisciplinarity**: Initiatives exploring novel approaches to embedding interdisciplinarity within curricula and programme structures, facilitating cross-disciplinary collaboration, and enhancing overall teaching and learning practices.

3. **Multilingualism**: Initiatives that leverage the University of Luxembourg's distinctive multilingual context by fostering and integrating multiple language competencies in teaching, learning, and assessment processes, developing multilingual educational resources and enhancing plurilingual skills among both students and staff.

4. **Teacher Development**: Structured initiatives that reinforce educators' pedagogical expertise and professional qualifications through evidence-based, reflective, and innovative approaches. Initiatives aimed at reflective frameworks to establish a robust university teaching qualification tailored specifically to the unique multilingual and multicultural environment of the University of Luxembourg are particularly welcomed.

5. **Student-Centred Learning**: Initiatives explicitly designed to enhance transversal skills development, including critical thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, group work, and leadership capabilities among students, thus preparing them for academic success and future labour market performance.

6. **Student Life and Participation**: Initiatives that deepen student engagement in governance, campus life, and the broader university community. This may involve expanding co-curricular and service-learning opportunities and promoting students as active contributors and partners in the campus life and university governance.

7. **Educational Technologies, AI, and Digital Tools**: Initiatives integrating cutting-edge educational technologies and digital tools, including artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, digital analytics, and innovative learning management systems, with the aim of enriching learning experiences and enhancing teaching effectiveness.

8. **Inclusivity and Accessibility**: Initiatives explicitly aimed at creating inclusive educational practices and accessible learning environments that accommodate diverse student backgrounds, learning styles, and specific educational needs, ensuring equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity in the educational process and attainment.

9. **Lifelong Learning - Continuous Education**: Initiatives designed to support flexible and accessible learning pathways, such as micro-credentials, stackable modules, executive and professional certificates, enabling lifelong upskilling, reskilling, and ongoing professional development aligned with evolving national and international labour market demands.

Proposals submitted to the EIF must clearly demonstrate alignment with the teaching and learning objectives outlined above, reflect international best practices, and be grounded in rigorous evidence-based pedagogical scholarship. Funded initiatives are expected to have measurable outcomes and a tangible long-term impact on enhancing the University's educational landscape.

Consortium

Lead Applicant

The Lead Applicant, acting as the principal investigator, must be a member of the University of Luxembourg's academic or administrative staff actively involved in teaching, curriculum development, pedagogical innovation, student and professorial affairs, programme management, or other relevant support activities in areas of teaching and learning.

The Lead Applicant must have an employment contract with the University of Luxembourg that exceeds the proposed duration of the initiative by at least 6 months (e.g., if the initiative is

scheduled for one year starting on 1 September 2026, the Lead Applicant's employment must extend at least until 28 February 2028).

One or more teams within the University of Luxembourg may support the Lead Applicant in forming the core Consortium responsible for implementing the proposed initiative.

In the framework of EIF, adjunct teachers (*vacataires)* and all categories of *enseignants-chercheurs,* including instructors that are delegated from partner institutions to teach at the University of Luxembourg, are considered part of the University's teaching community. As such, they are eligible to apply as Lead Applicants or participate as internal members of the Consortium.

> **Note:** <u>Interdisciplinary</u> teams comprising members from different faculties, Interdisciplinary Centres (ICs), departments, administrative units, and the student community are particularly encouraged. Such diverse collaborations are considered essential for generating comprehensive and impactful outcomes.
>
> As a general principle, <u>gender-balanced</u> participation is expected within the core Consortium of each submitted initiative. The gender composition of the Consortium will be considered during the evaluation process.

External partners

The involvement of <u>external stakeholders</u>, such as other educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, industry partners, and public institutions, as auxiliary partners in the Consortium, is permitted.

However, external stakeholders cannot serve as the Lead Applicant or receive the majority share of the allocated budget (please refer to the Funding and Eligible Costs section).

Student Participation

Active <u>student participation</u>, whether individually (Bachelor, Master, PhD students) or via recognized student bodies and associations (e.g., Student Delegation, student associations, study programme representatives), is highly encouraged and will be positively assessed during evaluation. Active student involvement is expected throughout the entire duration of the initiative, as students are expected to co-create and contribute substantively, as partners to all main activities.

Within this call, student participation (as co-creators, and partners) refers to meaningful collaboration between students and staff in the design, implementation, and evaluation of educational initiatives. Students are not only participants or recipients of educational innovations but active contributors who help shape the project and its outcomes.

This may include, for example:

- contributing to the design of teaching and learning activities or learning resources

- collaborating in project development and decision-making processes

- participating in data collection, analysis, or evaluation activities

- co-presenting or co-disseminating project outcomes

Proposals should clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the student partners and how their contributions will influence the initiative.

Student participation from external partners is allowed only when students from the University of Luxembourg are already engaged in the Consortium.

Note: At least 50% of the total EIF budget will be specifically reserved for initiatives that include students as integral members of the Consortium.

Funding

Calls for initiatives and collaborations will occur biannually.

Proposals are welcome for any amount, with a maximum funding amount set at €100,000 per initiative.

Initiatives must typically not exceed two (2) years in duration. However, proposals requiring a longer implementation period may be considered if thoroughly justified. Any exceptions to the two-year duration rule must be explicitly indicated and convincingly justified within the EIF application form.

For initiatives involving multiple teams within the Consortium, a balanced distribution of both budget and responsibilities for planned activities is expected and will be evaluated accordingly.

The EIF committee reserves the right to amend proposed budgets and the final amount of awarded funding based on their evaluation of submitted proposals.

All awarded funds must be fully spent within the approved funding period. Any unspent funds at the conclusion of the initiative will be returned to the EIF.

Eligible Costs

The following costs are <u>eligible</u> for funding under EIF initiatives:

- <u>Material costs</u>, including educational software licenses, specialized educational equipment, and other project-specific materials.

- <u>Expert fees and honorariums</u> (e.g., *vacataire, conferencier,* consultant, etc.) that are outside the salary costs of the university's staff members.

- <u>Student contracts</u> at the University of Luxembourg, strictly for activities directly related to and within the duration period of the submitted initiative.

- <u>Event costs</u>, including workshops, seminars, training sessions (covering catering, room rental, logistics, etc.).

- <u>Travel expenses</u> directly associated with the implementation and dissemination of project activities, such as field visits, conference attendance, and collaborative meetings, provided these expenses align with the University of Luxembourg's financial guidelines.

- <u>Production costs</u> for digital content and multimedia resources, including videos, posters, leaflets, websites, and similar outputs.

- <u>Publication and dissemination costs</u> directly related to project outcomes.

- Costs related to the collection of evidence aiming to inform the initiative's scope and activities (e.g., benchmarking, limited data collection, opinion polls, etc.).

> **Note:** No single category of eligible costs may exceed 30% of the total requested funding. For example, if the requested funding amount is €100,000, the material costs budgeted must not exceed €30,000.
>
> Eligible costs allocated to <u>external partners</u> must not exceed 30% of the total budgeted costs of the initiative.

Cost-neutral reallocations between budget categories during the initiative's implementation may be considered if justified. In such cases, the Lead Applicant must contact the EIF team (eif@uni.lu)

and provide a detailed written justification for the reallocation at least three (3) months before the planned completion date of the funded period.

Ineligible Costs

The following costs are ineligible under EIF funding:

- Personnel and staffing costs, (i.e., salaries).

- Student contracts at external partner institutions.

- Overhead or administrative fees.

- Standard office supplies or generic IT equipment, such as laptops and desktop computers.

- Expenses not directly related to approved project activities.

- Subcontracting of core project activities or deliverables.

- Gifts, entertainment, and other hospitality expenses.

Submission Process

The submission process consists of the following steps:

1. Download the EIF Application Template and the EIF Budget Template.

2. Carefully complete all required sections in both documents, adhering strictly to the guidance outlined in this document as well as the instructions provided within each template. Combine both completed documents into one single PDF file. Use the following naming convention for the consolidated PDF: yyyy_proposal acronym (e.g., 2026_BESTPROPOSAL).

3. Submit the consolidated PDF electronically to eif@uni.lu by the stipulated call deadline (see timeline below). Incomplete applications or submissions received after the deadline will not be considered.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis up to the submission deadline. Therefore, early applications are strongly encouraged.

(Re)application

Initiatives that are unsuccessful in one EIF call cannot reapply in the immediately following EIF call (e.g., if an application submitted in the autumn call is unsuccessful, it is subject to an embargo and cannot apply in the subsequent spring call).

After the embargo period has elapsed, the initiative may be re-submitted for consideration. The embargo period should be used by the applicants to strengthen their proposal, thereby enhancing the likelihood of successful funding in the subsequent call.

The same proposal may not be submitted to the EIF more than twice (inclusive of the initial submission and any subsequent re-application).

Qualifying Criteria

The EIF does not provide co-funding for ongoing or planned initiatives and projects already supported by other funding sources.

Similarly, EIF proposals must not replicate activities of previously funded and executed projects. By submitting a proposal, the consortium explicitly confirms that the proposed initiative is an original undertaking and has not applied or receiving financial support from other sources.

A Lead Applicant who has been awarded EIF funding is not eligible to apply again as a Lead Applicant until the currently funded initiative concludes. However, a Lead Applicant of an ongoing project may participate as a team member in other EIF-funded initiatives.

Individual students, including those participating through a student association involved in the initiative, are restricted to participation in only one funded initiative at a time.

A student association may participate concurrently in a maximum of two funded initiatives, provided the individual student participation restriction is respected.

Members of the EIF committee and the I²TL Advisory Board are permitted to apply for funding but must recuse themselves from discussions, evaluations, and decisions of all proposals submitted under the respective call. When such situations occur, a temporarily recused member of the EIF committee may be replaced by another expert with no conflict of interest to support the process during the ongoing call.

Staff employed directly by I²TL are not eligible to participate in consortia applying for EIF funding.

Language

Proposals must be submitted in English.

Evaluation

The EIF evaluation process will comprise the following steps:

1. **Eligibility Check**: Conducted by the I²TL administrative team to verify the submission completeness, adherence to the specified deadline, and compliance with required documentation.

2. **Proposal Review**: The review is coordinated by the EIF Committee. Each eligible proposal will be confidentially evaluated by two reviewers against criteria detailed in the EIF guidelines, as to assess alignment with EIF core objectives, potential for innovation, originality, feasibility, quality of proposed activities, the planned impact, appropriateness of budget allocation, and the depth of student involvement. The review may result in the following outcomes:

   - Proposals not recommended for funding in the current call, accompanied by detailed written feedback from the EIF Committee.

   - A shortlist of proposals recommended for funding for the I²TL Advisory Board to decide.

All funding decisions will be communicated to applicants by the deadlines outlined below. Each funding decision will be accompanied by the evaluation form detailing the decision and providing feedback for each evaluated criterion.

Important Dates

Spring Call

- **Call Opens:** 24 March 2026
- **Submission Deadline:** 24 May 2026
- **Evaluation Period:** Rolling basis until 15 July 2026
- **Notification of Results:** July 2026
- **Earliest Project Start Date:** 1 September 2026

Reporting

During the implementation period, recipients will be required to submit a Midterm Progress Report (with one exception – see below). For projects with a duration of more than six months, the Midterm Progress Report must be submitted at the midpoint of the project's implementation period.

For projects with a duration of six months or less, a Midterm Progress Report is required only if the total EIF funding exceeds €30,000.

A standardized template for the Midterm Progress Report will be provided by the EIF administrative team closer to the reporting period.

Upon completion of the funded period, recipients are required to submit an End of Activities Report within three months following the initiative's end date. The Report must detail implemented activities, achieved outcomes, dissemination actions undertaken, and include a complete financial overview. A standardized template for the End of Activities Report will be provided by the EIF administrative team.

Should there be necessary amendments to the project's activities, timeline, or budget, recipients must contact the EIF administrative team (eif@uni.lu), no later than three months before the planned end date of the initiative.

Dissemination and Involvement

Recipients of EIF funding are expected to actively disseminate results and share best practices through participation in flagship events organized by I²TL, such as the annual Teaching Day and events associated with teacher development and digital education programmes. Recipients will receive timely invitations to participate in these events and should plan for at least one dissemination event within their project timeline.

All funded initiatives will be showcased on the I²TL intranet platform, the university's official website, and featured in relevant I²TL reporting documents.

Acknowledgment of EIF funding must be clearly indicated in all disseminated materials and activities, utilizing the following standardized statement:

Contact and Support

For assistance and all queries related to the EIF, please contact the EIF administrative team at eif@uni.lu.

Check List

Use the checklist below to verify that your application is complete <u>before</u> submitting. Tick each box once the requirement is met.

	Items to verify
☐	The proposal clearly addresses **at least one** of the EIF core objectives.
☐	A **qualified Lead Applicant** from the University of Luxembourg is identified, and their contract extends at least six months beyond the project's end date.
☐	A **gender-balanced Consortium** is in place, with roles and responsibilities for each member clearly defined and described.
☐	**Student participation** is included, as partners / co-creators, or a rationale is provided if not applicable.
☐	External partners, if any, are listed as auxiliary partners and their costs do **not exceed 30 %** of the total budget.
☐	The **EIF Application Template** and **EIF Budget Template** are fully completed, following all guidance notes.
☐	The **requested funding** is ≤ €100 000 and no single eligible-cost category exceeds **30 %** of the total budget.
☐	The proposed **project duration** is ≤ 24 months, or an exceptional justification for a longer timeline is included in the application form.
☐	The initiative is not receiving funding from any other source and does not replicate a previously EIF-funded project.
☐	At least one **dissemination activity** is planned in the flagship event of the Institute for Innovative Teaching and Leaning (i.e., Teaching Day).
☐	All files have been merged into **one PDF**, named *yyyy_ACRONYM.pdf* (e.g., *2026_BESTPROPOSAL.pdf*).
☐	The consolidated PDF is to be emailed to eif@uni.lu by the end of day of the call deadline.