CSU's Artificial Intelligence Educational Innovations Challenge

Frequently Asked Questions

APPLICATION PROCESS

What is the submission deadline?
The submission deadline is April 30, 2025.

Does the proposal need to route through our campus grants office?
The Chancellor's Office does not require proposals to route through campus grants or sponsored programs offices. The AIEIC is internally funded, and no indirect costs are allowed. Campuses may establish their own internal review processes. The Chancellor's Office will work directly with provosts to transmit funds.

What letters of support are required?
Letters of support ensure that impacted work units and the provost approve the structure of a proposal to ensure it can be implemented if awarded.

- All proposals require letters of support from the PI's department chair and/or college dean

- If a proposal includes buyout or other expenditures for faculty or staff time, these expenditures must be explicitly authorized in letters of support

- If a proposal includes multiple PIs from different departments, each PI needs a letter from their department chair or dean

- An endorsement letter from the PI's provost is required for all proposals

When should I consult with my department chair and dean?
Consult with your department chair and/or dean about your idea well in advance of any internal campus deadlines, as letters of support and the provost's endorsement are required.

ELIGIBILITY & PARTICIPATION

Who is eligible to submit proposals as PI or co-PI?
- Tenured, tenure-track, and lecturer faculty (including part-time lecturer faculty)

- Faculty development directors (whether they have faculty or MPP appointments)

Can a faculty member participate in more than one proposal?
A faculty member may be involved with more than one proposal but may only serve as PI or co-PI on

a single proposal. If a person is involved in multiple projects, the narrative for each project should clearly indicate that the individual has sufficient time for all projects if funded, and support letters should confirm this availability.

Can MPPs or non-faculty staff participate in proposals?

Yes. Professional staff or academic administrators can be involved in proposals submitted by eligible PIs, as long as the PI's provost and anyone supervising the staff approves. Staff time, in the form of buyouts or stipends, may be included as allowed by CSU or campus policy.

Are proposals for courses within graduate programs eligible for the AI Challenge?

Yes, proposals involving courses within graduate programs are allowed.

The selection criteria (outlined on page 3 of the call) include "Curricular Impact and Reach." The priority areas receiving special consideration are in the undergraduate curriculum:

  i.   Lower-division general education curriculum integration
  ii.   Major-specific learning outcome revisions
  iii. Courses satisfying the CSU's Critical Thinking general education requirement

Proposals that address particular opportunities or challenges for incorporating AI technologies into graduate programs are eligible. For example, proposals developing use cases for incorporating GenAI into writing assignments or refining assessment strategies within graduate level courses and programs with potential to scale across disciplines and institutions are encouraged.

Can departments partner with other centers on campus?

Yes, partnerships with centers, such as centers for teaching and learning or student academic support centers, are allowed, especially if they maximize involvement of faculty and students in curricular innovation.

Can a PI partner with an external consultant?

The goal of the Challenge is to provide support for *CSU faculty and campuses* to define AI literacies and competencies related to their discipline, develop strategies to ensure CSU students learn with and through AI rather than letting it circumvent deep learning and critical thinking, and redesign curricula to prepare students to be empowered, equitable and ethical users and developers of AI in an increasingly AI-driven workplace.

If a project requires expertise that does not exist within the CSU, the cost to engage an external consultant could be incorporated into the budget, and it should be justified in the proposal narrative. However, proposals that allocate most or all funding to support faculty innovation are likely to be rated more highly.

How many proposals will be funded?

As many proposals will be funded as possible. If all proposals were in the Tier 1 category, we anticipate being able to fund up to 50 projects.

Is there a limit on how many proposals each campus may submit?
No, there is no limit on how many proposals each campus may submit. Provosts may choose to review proposals internally and determine which to endorse.

Is there a limit on how many proposals will be funded from a campus?
No, there is no limit to the number of proposals that will be funded from each CSU campus. All proposals endorsed by provosts will be reviewed according to the selection criteria.

PROJECT TYPES & SCOPE

What types of projects align with the AIEIC goals?
Proposals should support faculty to define AI literacies, ensure deep learning with AI, and redesign curricula to prepare students for AI-driven workplaces.

Would a proposal for a new course dedicated to AI literacy be appropriate?
Yes, a proposal for a new course dedicated to AI literacy could be submitted, as long as it aligns with the Challenge's purpose. However, a new course that has not been through the curriculum approval process might not score as high for curricular impact and reach as a course already approved and regularly offered.

Can proposals include Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs)?
Yes, FLCs are eligible project components.
Can proposals include collaborations with tutoring centers?
Yes, such collaborations are encouraged.

FUNDING TIERS

What are the funding tiers?
- Tier 1: Up to $30,000

- Tier 2: Up to $60,000

What are the differences between Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals?
- Tier 1 is appropriate for projects with smaller scope and impact

- Tier 2 should involve multiple courses within a project or involve more than one discipline and courses, with potential to impact a larger number of students

How many course releases can be funded?
There is no limit to the number of course releases that can be included in the budget for either funding tier. The budget should align with the proposed activities and projected curricular impact and reach.

How much should be allocated for a course release during the academic term?

PIs should confirm buyout rates with their campus. Systemwide buyout rates for 2025-26 are not yet confirmed. Rates for 2024-25 can be used as an estimate:

	2024-25 Rates (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)	
Term	Per Unit Buyout Cost	Per Course
Semester	$2489	$7467 (for 3 WTU)
Quarter	$1659	$6636 (for 4 WTU)

Can funds be allocated to compensate faculty for work performed in the summer or between academic terms?

Yes.

Will projects always receive the full requested amount?

If a project is selected, the award will be for the amount proposed, provided the budget aligns with the proposed activities. If a budget includes disallowed expenses or funding for activities not aligned with the project's purpose, the amount awarded may be less than requested.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY & SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

Who will own the copyright for materials developed?

CSU and campus policies regarding intellectual property apply to all materials developed through the Challenge. One goal of the AIEIC is for faculty to develop innovative instructional strategies that can be scaled across the system. Projects that propose to secure Creative Commons licenses for developed materials would rate more highly than those developing tools that would increase costs for students.

Can projects develop software or apps that entail application programming interface (API) fees?

The CSU is committed to student success and affordability. Affordable Learning Solutions is an example of the CSU's commitment to affordability. Projects that do not increase -- or that lower -- the cost of course materials for students are likely to be rated higherAny app or tool that adds costs for students would need to be justified as having learning benefits that exceed those of tools freely available to CSU students as part of the CSU's AI Strategy.