

Expression of Interest Guidance Notes

The following notes are intended to provide additional guidance to members of faculty who want to complete an Expression of Interest (EoI) for the initial qualification round of the Chancellor's Gap Fund. For additional guidance or clarification, please contact Dr. Peter Allen at pallen@innovation.pitt.edu.

What is the name of your technology or Idea?

Try and make sure that the name describes the idea reasonably well – a short sentence works well. You can use a single word (similar to what you might do for a product or company name) if you like, however, a more descriptive name helps the evaluators in the early stages of the process when there are a large number of ideas to process.

Please provide a brief description of your technology or idea

50-100 words is a good guideline for the amount of text in your description. Longer or shorter won't disqualify your EoI. Try and describe the idea with a broad audience in mind. Our evaluation team has a broad technical background, but you should aim to appeal to a broad audience and not just a technical expert in your field. It is always helpful to say why you think the idea is important.

What unmet need does your technology seek to address?

In this part you should describe the problem for which you are solving. You should also both indicate the scale and scope of the opportunity, as well as (if you know it) who might benefit – and this can include either an end customer, such as a patient for a medical application, or a company or industry sector. Try to be specific if you can with this description - numbers of patients, broad customer segment description (including size) is always helpful. If you don't know, the staff at the Innovation Institute may be able to help you – although at this stage a detailed market analysis won't be possible, we may be able to help you with a refinement of your description of the unmet need.

Proposed Use of Gap Funds

What we are looking for here is a clear statement of a critical experiment or proof of principle demonstration. The Gap Fund awards go to those who show a clear path forward to new data or evidence that will have a critical impact on the ability of the PI and University to commercialize the idea being described. A simple “we want to do more work and advance the idea a bit further” isn't likely to score highly in the review. The plan should be well described and accessible to the non-expert (see comments above). What we are looking for are a few well-framed milestones that provide a clear statement for the impact of the award money.

Estimated Timeline and Costs

At this stage, we are looking for guideline timings. For the size of the award, a 6-month timeframe should be possible to complete the work. With some experiments this may not be possible and that is fine, but the idea is that the money will be awarded and used in a timely fashion. We recognize that many bids will be for the maximum allowable amount, and there are a couple of things to consider:

- Asking for a smaller amount than the maximum will help your evaluation score
- Underestimating the costs to fit the award cap will likely be noticed by the judges and this may harm your evaluation score
- If you need (a little) more than the maximum award to complete a compelling experiment, please contact Dr. Peter Allen to discuss.

Previous Commercialization Interest

This check box is to indicate whether an outside industry partner or Venture Capital group have shown any interest previously. They may have asked about your technology and subsequently passed on the opportunity (maybe the idea was too early stage) but this still counts as 'previous interest'. If you are unsure about this, please contact your Licensing Manager.

Invention Disclosure number

This is the number that is assigned to any invention disclosure that you may have submitted through the Innovation Institute. You don't have to have one to apply in this cycle of the Gap Fund and one of the licensing managers will likely follow up with you at some stage to discuss how an Invention Disclosure can be created. Inserting this number greatly helps the evaluation team in their deliberations.

Licensing Manager

When you create an Invention Disclosure, you will have been assigned a Licensing Manager. As with the Invention Disclosure, letting us know who this is helps us greatly. We can find it out, but when we have a lot of EoIs to go through, having the information included is very helpful.