

Graduate Education Innovation Fund

Pilot Project Report

March 2024



Graduate Education Innovation Fund

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) launched the Graduate Education Innovation Fund (GEIF) in 2021 as a three-year pilot to advance excellence in graduate education. GEIF provides 10 seed grants of up to \$5,000 each annually.

Goals

The Graduate Innovation Education Fund is the first initiative of its kind dedicated to the specific needs of graduate program innovation from SGS. This initiative was a response to a call from graduate students for such initiatives and innovation.

Submitted proposals must show promise of scalability or transferability to other graduate learning environments (see Appendix A). Proposals must also address one of the following areas of innovation:

Experiential Learning Active learning opportunities that take students beyond traditional educational settings and methods.

Interdisciplinary Learning Collaborations among instructors across academic disciplines, units and divisions to create interdisciplinary learning opportunities.

Technological Innovation Use of technology to enhance the educational experience.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing Renewal of graduate education with specific attention to representation of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Diverse Cultural Perspectives Renewal of graduate education with specific attention to representation of racialized perspectives, other minoritized voices, as well as intercultural experiences and civic engagement. Strengthen opportunities to learn abroad and bring global experiences into class.

“Through the Graduate Education Innovation Fund, we want to support creative and thoughtful experimentation to revitalize our programs and better train the future generation of change-makers.”

- Prof. Vina Goghari, SGS Vice-Dean, Research and Program Innovation

Decolonization, Anti-oppression, and Anti-racism

Enhancing educational practices, such as teaching and curriculum renewal, to build a more just and equitable learning environment.

Professional Development Create, strengthen, and assess professional development opportunities for graduate students.

Public Scholarship Focus on engaging the public through a scholarly agenda. Strengthen opportunities for public dissemination of scholarly work in an ongoing two-way exchange of knowledge and practices.

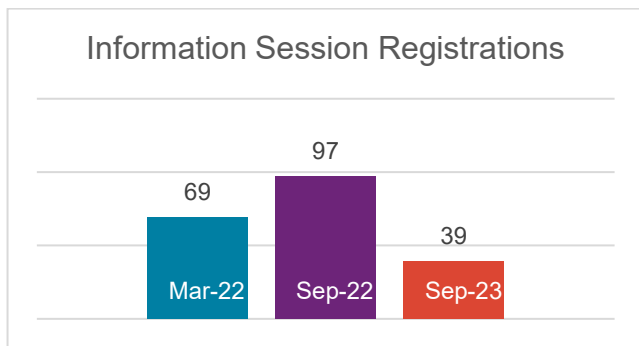
University of Toronto Summer Psychology Research Initiative

Recognizing that racialized students become increasingly underrepresented at higher levels of psychology education, the Summer Psychology Research Initiative (SPRINT) was developed by a team of graduate students to provide BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) high school students a meaningful research experience. The two-week, student-led program gives graduate and undergraduate students hands-on research, teaching, and mentorship experience.

“With support from GEIF we hosted our third year of SPRINT— from our initial virtual program with 25 participants, we have grown to have 60 BIPOC high school students.”

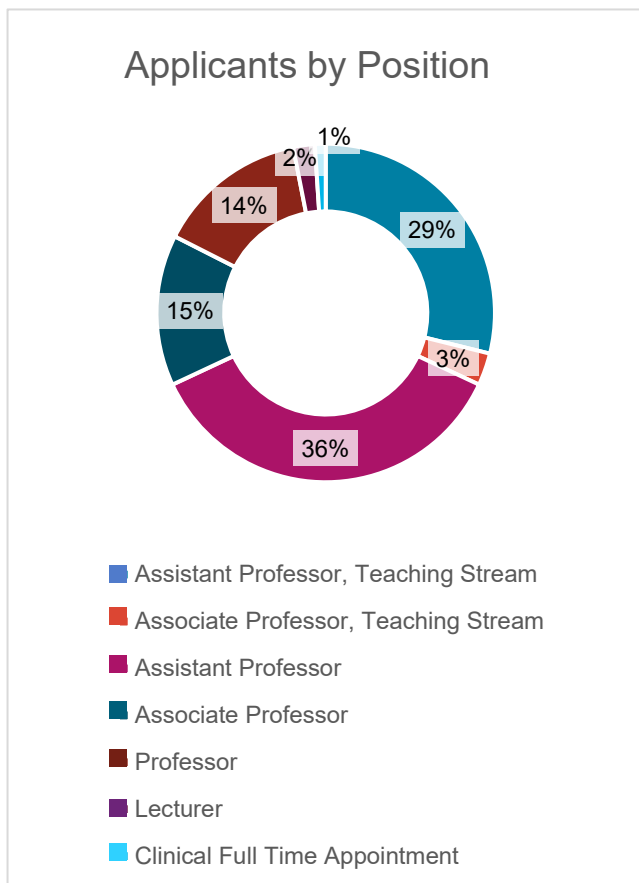
- Elizabeth Page-Gould, Faculty of Arts & Science

Reach

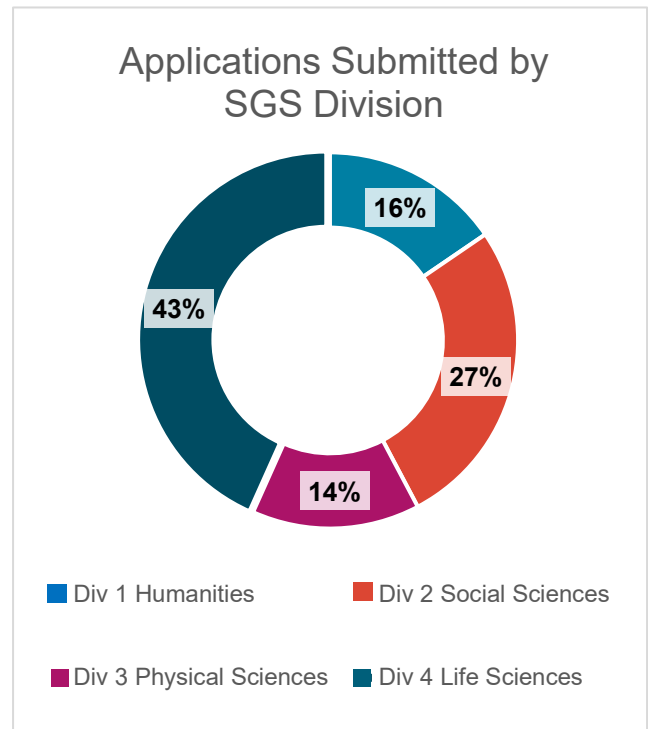


Interest in GEIF is far-reaching. Information sessions have been well-attended with dynamic engagement and discussion.

Since its inception, **97 faculty** have applied to the GEIF, with nine individuals applying more than once. As demonstrated below, GEIF attracts applications from faculty who hold a wide range of positions at the university.



Additionally, faculty from across the four SGS Divisions – Humanities, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences and Life Sciences – applied to the fund, with the majority coming from Life Sciences and the minority from the Physical Sciences (see Appendix B for a list of applications across departments).



Virtual Reality: An Innovative Pedagogy for Health Care Students

This innovative pilot project aimed to acquire and create Virtual Reality (VR) experiential learning modules, pilot these modules with students, explore their perceptions of VR as a teaching tool, and develop plans for a larger evaluation.

“VR modules were interesting, fun, and helpful methods of learning which allowed students to take on an active role.”

- Andrea Duncan, Temerty Faculty of Medicine

Results

In total, the Graduate Education Innovation Fund has granted \$118,438 to support 24 innovative educational projects since its inception. In addition to the funds provided by GEIF, many departments provided matching funding, adding an additional \$61,197 in support. This brings the combined total funding for GEIF projects (with GEIF and unit support) to \$179,635.

Over the past three years, GEIF has provided funding across all SGS Divisions. Of the proposals funded through GEIF thus far, 46% were in the Life Sciences followed by 29% in the Social Sciences. GEIF funding has supported a wide range of proposals across the university in 44 departments, 11 academic divisions, and on all three campuses (see Appendix C for a detailed breakdown).

24

Projects funded

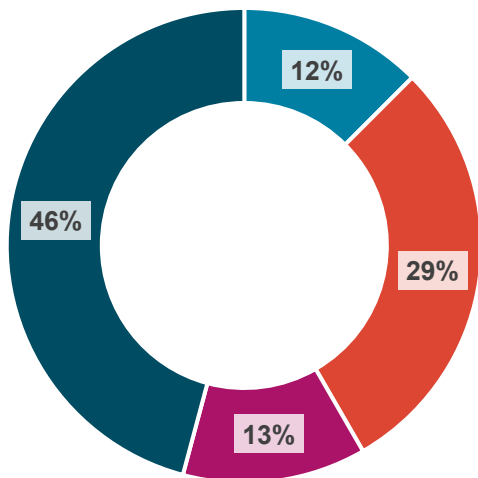
\$118K

Total funding

\$179K+

Combined total funding including matching funds

Funded Applications by SGS Division



- Div 1 Humanities
- Div 2 Social Sciences
- Div 3 Physical Sciences
- Div 4 Life Sciences

A Pilot Micro-credential in the DPES MEnvSc: Indigenous Perspectives in Environmental Science

This project was part of a longer-term curriculum redesign aimed at integrating micro-credentials into a seminar in the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences professional program.

“The feedback has been very positive so far and has reinforced the need for this type of curriculum within the MEnvSc program.”

- Karen Smith, Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences (DPES), UTSC

Impacts

The GEIF grew out of calls to both celebrate and seed innovation in graduate education. Through the engagement of our graduate community this initiative has actualized its vision, with 97 applications and 24 proposals funded. Many proposals also brought together graduate faculty with graduate students to enhance the learning and training environment.

SGS looks forward to continuing this partnership with graduate faculty and students to enhance the student experience, through fostering excellence in graduate education.

PT GAMES: Physical Therapy Gaming Applications for Motivating and Engaging Students

When physical therapy students need to learn the skills required for accreditation, they can now do so through this video “play your own adventure” simulation. Simulations walked students through the process of making clinical decisions on a simulated patient.

“We are exploring having these games made publicly available to physical therapy programs across Canada and available for independent licenses to physiotherapists who are seeking to enhance their continuing professional development.”

- Sharon Gabison, Temerty Faculty of Medicine

Experiential Hands-on Training in Islamic Manuscript Studies

Codicology is a core skill in Islamic Studies and should be part of the regular training of graduate students, but it is rarely taught and remains under-researched. Dramatic recent expansions in Toronto-based Islamic manuscript collections make Toronto for the first time a viable site for Islamic codicology training.

GEIF funding supported a series of workshops with Eryn Kropf, Librarian for Middle Eastern & North African Studies and Religious Studies and Curator of the Islamic Manuscripts Collection at the University of Michigan Library, and a well-published specialist in Islamic codicology.

- Jeanne Miller, Ruba Kana'an, Walid Saleh, Maria Subtelny, Faculty of Arts & Science

The Sound Lab

This project built a “sound lab” to provide students with the opportunity for the creative communication of research to a broad public within and beyond the university.

Through a range of programs within and beyond the classroom, students involved in the Sound Lab gained experience with the basics of sound recording and audio editing, allowing for the recording and dissemination of talks, events, and the production of podcasts.

- Rebecca Woods, Auguste Nahas, Tamara Walker, Edward Jones-Imhotep, Faculty of Arts & Science

For more information, please contact:

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University of Toronto

Appendix A

Funding Guidelines

Applicants are encouraged to consider the personnel resources and support they need for their project when building their budget. GEIF funds are not used to pay faculty salaries, offset travel costs to conferences where faculty are presenting or for basic computer and related equipment expenses. GEIF is not a research grant.

Eligibility

GEIF is open to all University of Toronto faculty members in a continuing appointment, including:

- Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor for both the tenure and teaching streams
- Part-time Assistant, Associate, and Professor that have undergone continuing review
- Typically hold Graduate Faculty Membership with SGS

Collaborators can include librarians, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows etc., as appropriate to the project.

Adjudication Committee

The committee is chaired by the Vice-Dean, Research and Program Innovation and is composed of three faculty members and two graduate students. Each application is assessed by three reviewers, who evaluate strengths and weaknesses and rate each application. The adjudication committee makes all final decisions, ensuring projects meet the goals of GEIF, will have real impact on their home units, and can be completed within one year.

Appendix B

Applications Across Departments

Academic Division	Department/Graduate Unit	# of Application(s)	# of Successful Application(s)
Applied Science and Engineering = (7)	Civil & Mineral Engineering	2	
	Mechanical & Industrial Engineering	1	1
	Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry	3	1
	Electrical & Computer Engineering	1	1
Architecture, Landscape & Design = (2)	Architecture	2	1
Arts & Science = (32)	Anthropology	3	1
	Astronomy and Astrophysics	1	
	Chemistry	1	
	Computer Science	1	
	English	3	1
	Geography & Planning	2	
	History & Philosophy of Science & Technology	1	1
	Linguistics	4	
	Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations	2	1
	Psychology	4	2
	Statistical Sciences	2	
	Global Affairs and Public Policy	1	
	Philosophy	1	

	Comparative Literature	1	
	Sociology	2	
	Physics	1	
	Medieval Studies	1	
	Women and Gender Studies	1	
Dentistry = (1)	Dentistry	1	
OISE = (10)	Curriculum, Teaching and Learning	3	
	Social Justice Education	1	
	Leadership, Higher and Adult Education	2	
	Applied Psychology and Human Development	4	3
Information = (3)	Information	3	1
Medicine = (28)	Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy	9	3
	Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology	3	
	Biochemistry	1	
	Institute of Medical Science	8	1
	Molecular Genetics	3	2
	Pharmacology	1	
	Physical Therapy	2	1
	Physiology	1	
Music = (1)	Music	1	
Pharmacy = (5)	Pharmaceutical Sciences	5	1
Public Health = (4)	Public Health	3	1

	Health Policy, Management and Evaluation	1	
Social Work = (1)	Social Work	1	
UTM = (2)	Institute for Management and Innovation	2	
UTSC = (1)	Physical & Environmental Science	1	1
Kinesiology & Physical Education		0	
Law		0	
Management		0	
Nursing		0	
Total		97	24

Appendix C

List of Funded Projects

Name of project	SGS Division	Year
The MedGenIDP – A Web-based IDP Tool for Non-PhD Students	Life sciences	2021-22
The Sound Lab	Humanities	2021-22
Social Media to Enhance Research Productivity and Impact	Physical Sciences	2021-22
Research Toolkits for Multiculturalism and Diversity Research in a Multidisciplinary Context	Social Sciences	2021-22
Summer Psychology Research Initiative (SPRINT)	Life Sciences	2021-22
Virtual Reality: An Innovative Pedagogy for Health Care Students	Life Sciences	2021-22
Project Management and Consulting Skills Module for International Virtual Engineering Student Teams	Physical Sciences	2021-22
Experiential Hands-on Training in Islamic Manuscript Studies	Humanities	2021-22
A Pilot Micro-Credential in the DPES MEnvSc Program: Indigenous Perspectives in Environmental Sciences	Physical Sciences	2021-22
Reimagining the Graduate Student Handbook: A Template to Support Graduate-Level Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion by Prioritizing Transparency, Relationality, and Demystification in a Key Document of Graduate Student Life	Humanities	2021-22
Experiential Learning of the Whole Research Process in one Semester	Social Sciences	2022-23
Designing a Hybrid Program Model for Professional Master's Education in Bioethics	Life Sciences	2022-23
Including Diverse Voices to Extend and Optimize Graduate-Level Ethics Curricula for The Life Sciences	Life Sciences	2022-23
Development of Professional Videos to Support Learning of Anti-Oppressive Communication and Therapeutic Use of Self Skills within the Occupational Therapy Program	Life Sciences	2022-23
Faculty and Students in Conversation: A Collaborative Model for Anti-Oppression Pedagogy and Practices in Higher Education	Social Sciences	2022-23

PT Games: Physical Therapy Gaming Applications for Motivating and Engaging Students	Life Sciences	2022-23
A Quality Improvement Community of Practice for Health Profession Graduate Students	Life Sciences	2022-23
Fostering Long-Lasting Career Development Opportunities through the Summer Psychology Research Initiative (SPRINT)	Life Sciences	2022-23
Rethinking Computational Education: an Active and Experiential Learning Approach that Blends Theory, Coding and Real Applications	Physical Sciences	2022-23
A Land-Based Learning Partnership (University of Toronto x Johnny Therriault First Nation School)	Social Sciences	2023-24
Footsteps Towards Reconciliation: Indigenous Cultural Sensitivity in Clinical Research Using Virtual Reality	Life Sciences	2023-24
Re-storying Autism Through Neurodiversity-Affirming Pedagogy and Practice in Occupational Therapy Education	Life Sciences	2023-24
Advancing Architectural Education Through AI Integration	Social Sciences	2023-24
Conferencing Skills in Literary Studies: A Community of Practice Working Group	Humanities	2023-24