Engaged Learning Starter Award (ELSA)

# Introduction

The Engaged Learning Starter Award supports first-generation and/or historically underrepresented students at SMU. It provides first-year students up to $500 to reimburse expenses related to a research project. While based on the capstone Engaged Learning Fellowship, the ELSA is designed to introduce students to research through a smaller-scale, exploratory project.

# What is research?

Research is the observation, discovery, or creation of previously unknown ideas. This can take many forms – from studying the market for a product, to creating a new piece of music. The main thing to remember is you need to have clear methods and documentation of your work (see guidelines).

# What is the funding for?

You may request up to $500 for expenses related to the research. Note that this is not a stipend – you will need to show receipts of what you purchased to be reimbursed. Some examples of expenses:

* Travel and hotel
* Bus or Uber transportation to project location
* Lab materials or equipment
* Printing flyers or a research poster

In some cases, we may be able to make advance purchases (e.g. plane tickets) on your behalf so you are not paying out of pocket (SMU COVID guidelines apply).

# What are the expectations for me?

* Monthly meetings with Engaged Learning staff
* Two online reflections (Due August 15 and December 15)
* Public presentation (Fall Research Symposium – October, TBD)
* Submission of a “final product” (e.g. research paper, video, etc.) – December 15

# How do I apply?

1. *Recommended but not required:* Find a faculty mentor to sponsor this research. At minimum, they will give you feedback on your initial proposal and your final product. Ideally, they will be available for some consultation and feedback along the way.
2. Create a proposal. We have a clear template on the next page that you can use. It is a scaled-back version of the Engaged Learning Fellowship proposal. Clearly describe the Who-What-When-Where-How.

Engaged Learning Starter Award Proposal

*Please include all sections of this template in your proposal. Delete our descriptions (in red).*

Name:

Mentor’s name:

# 1. Title

*Give your project an appropriate, short, succinct name.*

# **2. Purpose**

*In one or two paragraphs, explain why you want to do this project.*

* *Why is this topic important?*
* *What have you read on the subject?*
* *What are your goals with this project?*

# 3. Methodology

*What are you going to do? Be as detailed as you can.*

*Some examples:*

* *Lab experiments – what materials are you using, what are you testing? How many times?*
* *Surveys – how do you choose people to survey? How many people? What questions are you asking?*
* *Interviews – similar questions as surveys, except you will talk to fewer people in greater depth*
* *Literature review – summarize and synthesize writings on the subject*

*What are some challenges you might face?*

*Examples:*

* *Privacy*
* *Intellectual property*
* *Time constraints*

# 4. Timeline (from Spring to Fall)

*Develop a calendar for all phases of the project:*

* *Proposal and preparation*
* *The project itself*
  + *Lay out the first step (identifying participants, procuring materials, cleaning data)*
  + *Next step (interviews, experiments)*
  + *Next step (analysis, writing, etc.)*
  + *Etc. . . .*
* *Public presentation*

*This project should be doable between the beginning of summer (May) and the Fall Research Symposium in October.*

# 5. Bibliography or Background Research

*What have you read about this subject? List a few sources that made you interested in this.*

# 8. Funding Request

*Up to $500. Please see [link to funding document] for details on what may or may not be reimbursed.*

1. *Briefly explain your request for funding (1 paragraph)*
2. *ITEMIZED LIST:* 
   1. *List the items you need for your project, such as project supplies, travel, or other expenses*
   2. *List the quantity and estimated cost for each*
   3. *Total the amount (not to exceed $500)*
   4. *If you need additional lines, right-click/control-click on the table, then choose “Insert → Rows Below”*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expense** | **Source/Vendor** | **Cost/unit** | **Quantity** | **Total Cost** |
| Example 1: Hard drive for backing up video data | Best Buy | $100 | 1 | $100 |
| Example 2: Gift cards for study participants | Amazon | $10 | 10 | $100 |

**Total requested:** $ 200.00

Engaged Learning Starter Award – Review Rubric

**Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5%**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0%** = non-existent |  | **2.5%** = somewhat or severely underdeveloped |  | **5%** = clearly articulates project |

**Purpose \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 30%**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0%** = non-existent |  | **15%** = somewhat or severely underdeveloped |  | **30%** = clear statement of project goals, background research, and personal learning aspirations |

**Methodology \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 30%**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0%** = non-existent |  | **15%** = somewhat or severely underdeveloped |  | **30%** = clearly describes the proposed methods, potential challenges, and all previous work done in preparation for undertaking the project |

**Timeline \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 15%**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0%** = non-existent |  | **7.5%** = somewhat or severely underdeveloped |  | **15%** = clearly articulated and feasible timeline (with built-in time for delays, etc.) |

**Bibliography and/or Background Research \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 10%**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0%** = non-existent |  | **5%** = somewhat or severely underdeveloped |  | **10%** = cites several sources that inform the project |

**Funding Request \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 10%**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0%** = non-existent or inappropriate (e.g. requesting stipend in excess of $2K, etc.) |  | **5%** = insufficient detail or minor issues (e.g. over- or under-estimating costs or quantities) |  | **10%** = appropriate plans for use of funds, clearly lists sources and prices |