



# EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

## TIPS AND HINTS FOR PREPARING A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION

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COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

# EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

- ❖ THE EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION PROGRAM IS A \$1,500 AWARD ESTABLISHED TO SUPPORT GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH IN THE **SUMMER**.
- ❖ THE AWARDS ARE INTENDED TO ASSIST GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE CONDUCT OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE WORKS THAT WILL ENHANCE THEIR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.
- ❖ RECIPIENTS OF THIS GRANT WILL ALSO RECEIVE A **ONE-CREDIT TUITION STIPEND TO ENROLL IN A COURSE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THEIR RESEARCH DURING ONE OF THE TWO SUMMER SESSIONS**.

# BASIC ELIGIBILITY

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THIS AWARD IF...

- ❖ YOU ARE A GRADUATE STUDENT AT NMU
- ❖ ARE IN GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING  
(cumulative GPA  $\geq 3.0$ )
- ❖ ARE NOT USING A EMPLOYEE BENEFIT TUITION  
WAIVER

# BASICS - FUNDABLE V. NON-FUNDABLE

## You can use EIE for...

- ❖ Activities that your department defines as “scholarly or creative work”
- ❖ Activities that result in a tangible product
- ❖ Funds related to supplies, materials, travel, living expenses, or other activities directly associated with your proposed project
- ❖ Work must take place May 10 - Aug 25.
- ❖ Expenses incurred while traveling to scholarly meetings where you’re presenting a paper or creative exhibit (but be prepared to provide proof that your paper/exhibit has been accepted at the time you’re applying)

## EIE can NOT be used for...

- ❖ Activities that you’d do as part of your normal job
- ❖ Attending a conference without presenting your work
- ❖ Payment for services rendered to a third party

# PARTS OF YOUR APPLICATION

1. Abstract (250 words max) and title of course to be taken in summer.
2. A 4-6 page narrative, double-spaced, in 12-pt. Times New Roman, including:
  - ❖ A statement of the problem, project objectives, significance
  - ❖ A brief discussion of the project rationale and a literature review
  - ❖ The project plan with a timetable with expected outcomes
  - ❖ Statement of resource availability (supplies, equipment, staff)
3. Budget form\* -- be clear about how you are spending the money and where your numbers come from. It needs to make sense, but not be overly detailed.
4. Appendices
  - ❖ Your Curriculum Vitae
  - ❖ Your transcript (unofficial transcripts are OK)
  - ❖ Letter of support from your advisor
  - ❖ If applicable, copy of Final Report from previous EIEs
  - ❖ If applicable, documentation of IACUC/IRB application/approval

# APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS

## WHAT THE STUDENT MUST DO:

- ❖ Plan ahead! You need a letter of support from your faculty advisor/sponsor\*, which can take time to obtain. You also may need to apply for permission to conduct research using human or animal subjects.
- ❖ Submit your complete application through the Cayuse system. All your documents (ideally combined, but can be separate documents) need to be in PDF format.

**\*Your advisor/sponsor is the faculty member working on this project with you**

## BEHIND THE SCENES:

- ❖ February: Your department head will need to approve your application. They will also rate it. If more than one student from your department applies, department heads will rank the applicants.
- ❖ March: The ranked applications are reviewed, and awards are determined by the Graduate Programs Committee toward the end of the month.
- ❖ End of March/early April: Awards will be announced. (Watch your email!)

# EVALUATION: QUICK GUIDE

- ❖ The significance of the proposed project and soundness of the methodology. **See *the Evaluation Rubric*.**
- ❖ Clarity of presentation and planning of the proposed project.
- ❖ Adherence to format and content requirements.
- ❖ Justification of additional funding for second year applicants.

# SCORING RUBRIC

- ❖ **Pay attention to detail!**
- ❖ **Excellence in Education is a grant**
  - ❖ **It is practice for grant writing on a bigger scale.**
  - ❖ **Huge grants have been denied as a result of small errors.**

## Scoring Rubric for Excellence in Education Grant Applications

Components
Project abstract, including course name & number
Project narrative (all components addressed), 4-6 pages
References Cited
Budget form
CV
Most recent transcript
Letter of support from advisor

Statement of Purpose	# of Points
Is/are the research question(s) or creative project clearly defined with appropriate rationale?	8
Are the goals clearly stated and objectives measureable and achievable?	6
Is the scope of the question(s) or project manageable within the timeframe and context of the study?	6
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>20</b>

Rationale and Literature Review	# of Points
Does the project suggest a novel approach to addressing a problem/need? (Or direct contribution to the student's area of study?)	5
Is an appropriately thorough literature review included to support the need for the project?	5
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>10</b>

Methodology	# of Points
Are the proposed methods delineated and the rationale for the methodology clearly stated and supported?	4
Are methods planned in conjunction with an appropriate timeline?	4
Does the timeline include expected outcomes (paper, presentation or creative work)?	4
Does the proposal include adequate description of anticipated resources needed for completion where applicable?	8
Is the budget detailed, reasonable and justified in relation to the project's proposed aims and activities?	10
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>30</b>

# SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- ❖ Remember: you must propose a project that you are able to do
- ❖ Make sure the work can be done in the amount of time and with the resources you have
- ❖ If you need to modify your project, you will need to submit the modification to the Graduate Programs Committee for approval (and that is not guaranteed)
- ❖ Remember your project must involve a summer credit
- ❖ Talk to your advisor now about what that summer credit will look like. If you are planning to do a directed study or thesis/capstone credits, are they willing to serve as instructor?



# DEADLINE DAY:

- ❖ **February 13, 2026.** You must submit your application in Cayuse (by clicking “Route for Review”) **by 11:59 p.m.**
- ❖ Your application should include four main components noted on the *Excellence in Education Checklist* (see your handout or the NMU Research and Sponsored Programs website under “Excellence in Education Research Program Guidelines.”)
- ❖ <https://nmu.edu/sponsoredprograms/excellence-education-research-program-guidelines>



# SUBMITTING in CAYUSE

All documents submitted must be PDFs. While you can submit documents separately, it is preferable if you combine all into a single PDF to upload in Cayuse.

Hands-on example of submission: [Link to Cayuse](#) (Do not use this “test” link for your submission. When submitting, access Cayuse through [our website](#).)

# WINNING ISN'T EVERYTHING...

- ❖ Winning an award is only the first step in a grant.
- ❖ For the Excellence in Education, you must enroll in 1 credit over summer in a subject that is related to the topic of your project.
  - The cost of the 1 credit is covered by the award.
- ❖ At the end of your project, you must submit a final report detailing what you did and how the money was spent.
  - Get used to reports. All grants require them. (Some grants require progress reports throughout the grant period.)

# FINAL REPORTS

NMU's final report is a short version of a typical grant final report. It asks:

1. What was done? (Summarize the project activities.)
2. What were the results?
3. What was produced (publication, presentation, creative work, etc.)?
4. What further research might this lead to?
5. What sources of external grants did you (or might you) seek?
6. Detail the actual budget expenditures.

\*\*\*Due October 15, 2026\*\*\*

- ❖ <https://nmu.edu/sponsoredprograms/internal-grant-reporting>



# OTHER RESEARCH FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ Three Minute Thesis (3MT)
  - [Guidelines](#)
- ❖ Spooner Student Research Grant
  - [Guidelines](#)
- ❖ Student Technology Innovation Award (STECH)
  - [Guidelines](#)
- ❖ Rural Leadership Fellowship Program
  - [Guidelines](#)



# AN OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANT 2026 DATES

- ❖ **February 13 by 11:59 pm:** Submit Application (See Application Procedure on [website](#))
- ❖ **February:** Department Head approves, rates, and submits student rankings (if applicable)
- ❖ **Late March:** Review by Graduate Programs Committee (GPC)
- ❖ **End March/Early April:** Award notification (depending on the GPC meeting schedule, award notifications may be made slightly earlier or later)
- ❖ **End of May:** Deadline for student to be registered for a summer session course relating to their research. One credit of graduate-level tuition is provided in the Excellence in Education Award. If the student is not enrolled in at least a one-credit course relating to their research by this date, their Excellence in Education funds will be rescinded.
- ❖ **Oct 15:** Student submits final report

# QUESTIONS?

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