

Your Project Was Selected – Now What?

Congratulations on the approval of your Bass Connections project! Here are some key considerations and resources to help you get organized and make a strong start.

Build a Strong Team

Bass Connections will run a centralized recruitment process for all Bass Connections teams. This includes using key communication channels across campus to make students aware of the opportunity to apply, organizing a fair in January for students to come and speak directly with you about your team, and collecting student applications through our online portal.

There are several actions and considerations that you can take to help recruit the best team, including:

- Review the **project description** that the Bass Connections team prepares for you on the website to ensure that it clearly articulates the project goals and your expectations for students (this description will be sent to you for review in early January). This will help students make informed decisions.
- Have a clear sense of **what skills, backgrounds, and interests your team needs**. Consider:
 - What is the right **size** for your team? How much work needs to be done and how do you envision this work being structured? Most Bass Connections teams have between six and twelve students.
 - What **disciplines/skills/experiences** would benefit the team?
 - What mix of **undergraduates, professional/graduate students** would be ideal?
 - If you haven't already identified a **client or community partner**, is there an opportunity to integrate an external partner? See tips on [engaging external partners](#).
 - Do you need a **project manager** and who would be best to play that role? Feedback suggests that having a project manager helps improve team functioning, reduces the workload of the team leaders and provides a valuable developmental opportunity for graduate students or post-docs. See our advice on how to effectively structure the [project manager role](#).
- Consider **interviewing students** prior to accepting them to the team to discuss the nature of the work and expectations. This will help you assess students, but it will also help students decide if the team is the best fit for them.
- Once you select students, consider how to **get them up to speed quickly**. This might include assigning readings before the project starts or planning a few initial trainings. Remember, there are many [resources](#) at Duke to help providing grounding in research methods so this does not have to rest entirely on your shoulders.

Tips for recruiting participants

Most teams receive strong student interest but we also recommend that you conduct some targeted outreach through your own channels, including:

- Participate in the Bass Connections Fair in late January. This is a great opportunity to discuss your project directly with the most interested students.
- Advertise the project to students in your current and previous classes, current and former advisees, and other students you know.
- Circulate a description of your project through your department's email listserv.
- Ask other faculty for student recommendations and/or to publicize the project to their students.
- Target graduate students by contacting relevant [Directors of Graduate Studies](#) (DGSs) and asking them to share information about your project with their students and/or ask for student recommendations.
- Advertise the project through listservs and student groups in the master's programs and professional schools.

Clarify and Articulate Project Goals and Expectations

Feedback from faculty and students who have previously participated in Bass Connections suggests that it's important to set clear and achievable goals and expectations for everyone involved in the project *before the project begins* – and even before you start recruiting students since this will ensure that everyone enters into the project with aligned expectations. Some suggestions include:

- Host a **team leader kick-off meeting** with all of the faculty/staff involved in the project to clarify goals, roles and time commitment.
- You might also host a **student kick-off meeting** in the spring after student selection. You can use this time to: introduce team members to one another, describe the project goals, set expectations and provide students with any background resources. This can mitigate any subsequent student “melt.”
- Use a planning document such as a [team charter](#) to help your team plan and ensure that everyone on the team has aligned expectations.
- At the beginning of the team's work, provide students with a document outlining the **goals** for the work and **expectations** for student participation and contributions, including how students will be graded. See our [syllabus template](#) and [grading guidance](#). **(A grading rubric is required for all teams offering academic credit)**

Minimize Administrative Challenges

There are several steps that you can take up front to minimize the administrative demands of leading a team including:

- **Pick a time for your team to meet weekly and publicize this time during registration** so that students who sign up can schedule the rest of their courses around this time. This is a recommendation that has been heavily emphasized by prior team leaders who have found scheduling to be the single greatest challenge for their team.
- Talk to the theme administering your project and then your school/department financial administrator to discuss how **funds** will be managed and administered.
- Identify and plan for **IRB approvals** early.

- Determine whether students will receive **stipends or course credit** and how crediting and grading will work before the project begins. In general, students receive stipends for any work performed over the summer, and course credit for participation during the academic year (the exception being advanced PhD students who do not need course credit). See [hourly student rates](#) and our [crediting and grading guidance](#).
- Identify a [project manager](#) who can help keep the team on task.
- Use [resources available through Duke](#) to help the team communicate.
- Be mindful of Bass Connections [policies and expectations](#) for students and team leaders.

Structure Your Team Effectively

Student feedback has demonstrated that the opportunity to engage in team-based inquiry is one of the most valuable and rewarding aspects of Bass Connections. That said, poorly structured teams are also the most common source of frustration for faculty and students alike. Before your team begins its work, we encourage you to visit our [Team Resource Center](#) which contains materials and guidance that may be useful to you:

- [Executive Summary: How Our Research Teams Fail and Succeed](#)
- [Project Team Charter Template](#)
- [Syllabus Template](#)
- [Crediting and Grading Guidance and Templates](#)
- [Team Building Suggestions](#)
- [Setting Team Norms](#)
- [Research and Technology Support Resources](#)
- [Engaging External Organizations and Communities](#)
- [Using a Project Manager to Improve Your Team](#)