



Bass Connections Project Proposal Guidelines for 2018-2019 Project Teams

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION

Proposals will be accepted from September 5 until 11:59 p.m. on November 3, 2017. Please download and use the [proposal template](#) (Word document). When you have completed your proposal, please [submit it through the online form](#).

OPPORTUNITY

Bass Connections provides funding to support team-based research projects that engage faculty, undergraduates, and graduate/professional students in interdisciplinary exploration of big, unanswered questions about major societal challenges. This call for proposals is for project teams that will begin in Summer or Fall 2018.

For some faculty, Bass Connections funds a pilot research project that lays the groundwork for external grant proposals. For other faculty, Bass Connections offers an innovative teaching model and an opportunity to mentor students in a small group atmosphere. For still other faculty, Bass Connections is an opportunity to initiate or deepen engagement with a community organization or other collaborators outside of Duke who can provide input into the construction of research questions and translate research findings into action.

ELIGIBILITY

Proposals may be submitted by any faculty member. Graduate students, postdocs, and trainees/fellows may also propose projects, *but all projects must have at least one faculty team leader*.

BASS CONNECTIONS PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Bass Connections project teams seek to establish *three core connections*:

1. between the academy and the broader world
2. across areas of disciplinary expertise
3. across learner levels

Project teams are expected to be more than a collection of individuals working in parallel. Instead, they should foster *dynamic collaboration in which all members are exposed to the diverse aspects of each project, and work together toward shared goals*.

A major educational goal of the program is to provide students and faculty the opportunity to *struggle collectively with a real, complex problem and produce meaningful deliverables*. The chosen issue should have a scale and scope large enough so the solution will make a significant impact and yet not be so large as to be overwhelming. Deliverable products may take several forms, including published reports

and articles, curated exhibitions, datasets to spur further research, marketable services or commodities, and strategic solutions for community needs.

Projects that are situated in an organizational setting or a community context, or that have an external client element, offer rewarding challenges and give students a glimpse into the world of professional practice.

THEMATIC AREAS

As in past years, projects may be proposed in relation to one of the five themes of Bass Connections. Faculty may apply to more than one theme if their project aligns with the goals of multiple themes, but they must make a case for these connections in the proposal.

[Brain & Society](#)

[Education & Human Development](#)

[Energy & Environment](#) (Note: the Energy theme has been renamed to reflect the broadening scope of its activities, which have been further enabled by several gifts. Please see the next page for special funding opportunities for this theme.)

[Global Health](#) (Note: the Global Health theme also encourages proposals related to U.S. health *disparities*)

[Information, Society & Culture](#) (Note: faculty applying to this theme, or another theme in conjunction with this theme, are encouraged to consider proposing a project team that links with a summer [Data+ team](#). Faculty interested in this option do not need to submit a separate proposal to Data+ but should explain how the Bass Connections project team and the Data+ team will be integrated. For more information about Data+, and ideas for connecting Data+ with a Bass Connections project team, contact [Paul Bendich](#), Director of Data+.)

New Opportunity – Bass Connections Open

Faculty may now propose a project that meets the three core connections of Bass Connections – but does not align with one of the five themes – by applying through the open channel. Faculty contemplating this option should keep in mind that the current five themes each cover a great deal of ground. You cannot apply to *both* the open channel and a theme (i.e., this is an exclusive option). In addition to the selection criteria noted below, proposals submitted through this channel will also be judged with regard to how creatively they explore new topics beyond the current theme areas.

Projects selected through this channel may still be *administered* by one of the existing themes.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Projects should align with the mission of Bass Connections, in particular with the *three core connections* (listed on page 1) and a focus on *collaborative learning*.
2. Preference will be given to projects that embody the values of Bass Connections in terms of *disciplinary diversity* (both in leadership and anticipated students).

3. An ideal team includes participants at *multiple educational levels* who work toward shared goals and outputs. Project teams must include opportunities for undergraduates to participate as team members, and should propose opportunities for participation at additional learner levels (e.g., master's or Ph.D. students, professional students, residents, postdocs).

Projects that meet the above criteria and carry some co-funding from other sources will be given preference.

SPECIAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Due to several gifts, we can support proposals that take advantage of the opportunities described below:

- **Ethics:** Funds are available to support projects that address ethical and normative issues broadly-conceived, with a preference for projects that overlap with core [Kenan program areas](#). If you are interested in discussing ideas for potential projects, please contact [Suzanne Shanahan](#), Director of the Kenan Institute. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this rubric should *apply through any theme or Bass Connections Open and check the Ethics option*.
- **Arts:** Funds are available to support projects that complement hands-on artistic creation in any medium with research related to aesthetic, cultural, historical, or theoretical dimensions that inform the work. The project should culminate in a public exhibition, screening, reading, or performance. The project team may have dedicated space in the Rubenstein Arts Center if appropriate. If you are interested in discussing ideas for potential projects, please contact [Scott Lindroth](#), Vice Provost for the Arts. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this rubric should *apply through any theme or Bass Connections Open and check the Arts option*.
- **Humanities:** Funds are available to support humanities-inspired projects (e.g., projects engaged with historical perspectives, diverse linguistic and literary processes and products, or aesthetic/performative dimensions). Applicants from any field are encouraged to propose such projects. If you are interested in discussing ideas for potential projects, please contact [Deborah Jenson](#), Director of the Franklin Humanities Institute. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this rubric should *apply through any theme or Bass Connections Open and check the Humanities option*.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Through a gift to the Nicholas School of the Environment and Bass Connections, funds are available to support projects related to biodiversity conservation: projects that aim at stopping degradation of the planet's natural environment, the species it harbors, and the services it provides to people. These projects must include at least one NSOE faculty/postdoc/or graduate student on the proposal. Proposers are also strongly encouraged to partner with the World Wildlife Fund on projects. For more information, contact [Dean Urban](#). Faculty who wish to propose projects under this sub-theme should *apply through the Energy & Environment theme, and check the Biodiversity Conservation option*.
- **Sustainable Energy Transitions:** Funds are available to support projects that explore issues of energy access and sustainability in the developing world. For more information, contact [Tim Profeta](#), Director of the Nicholas Institute. Faculty who wish to propose projects under this sub-theme should *apply through the Energy & Environment theme, and check the Sustainable Energy Transitions option*.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

Budgets typically range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Generally speaking, projects that involve summer funding for student work, graduate student support for project management roles, international travel, and/or special research materials/equipment tend toward the higher range.

When submitting your proposal, complete the budget template, listing primary expense categories. Budgets should not include support for faculty time.

We strongly encourage proposals that leverage additional funds. Please describe such matching funds (both awarded and under consideration) so that we understand the comprehensive outlay for the project. Please also note that themes may choose to provide only partial funding in some circumstances.

PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

Please use the [proposal template provided](#), renaming the file with your proposed project name and uploading it as a **Word document** (not a PDF) [through the online form](#).

Proposals should include the following elements, as further described in the proposal template:

1. Project description
2. Team leaders and contributors
3. Project approach and team composition
4. Timeline and milestones
5. Budget estimate

PROJECT SELECTION TIMING

- Applications will be accepted from September 5 until 11:59 p.m. on November 3, 2017.
- Proposals will be reviewed and refined as needed, and selections will be made by December 22, 2017.
- Students will be recruited for selected teams in January and February 2018, with student selections made by team leaders by the end of March 2018.
- Projects selected may begin as early as Summer 2018 and must begin in the 2018-2019 academic year.

CONTACT

For general questions:

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For questions specific to a theme:

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