

# EDLAB Education Research Grants

Call for proposals for project period AY 2026-2027

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## 1. About the grants

EDLAB - Maastricht University Centre for Teaching & Learning invites Maastricht University staff to apply for an EDLAB education research grant of up to €10,000. The grant supports education research contributing to innovations that optimise learning and wellbeing among UM students and staff. It is also intended to serve as a stepping education stone for staff interested in applying for larger education grants, such as Comenius, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and other NRO grants.

### 1.1 Goal

Since its inception 50 years ago, Maastricht University's education has been focused on empowering students to develop knowledge, expertise, and global citizenship values and competencies through solving real-world problems. Yet designing and delivering such education poses unique challenges, particularly as 'real-world problems' are becoming increasingly more complex and affecting our everyday lives in unforeseen ways. EDLAB education research grants therefore aim to provide staff with space and time to critically reflect, to go beyond own knowledge and experience, and develop understanding based on scientific inquiry to ensure best practices for students as well as for those providing the education.

The focus of a typical grant project is on short-term (one year) practice-oriented research into questions directly relating to UM education. Projects involve three modes of engagement:

- Conducting theoretically informed, methodologically sound and appropriately focused inquiry into aspects of one's (or a colleague's) education practice.
- Connecting with colleagues from both one's own and other UM faculties/service centres to exchange knowledge and expertise across contexts and disciplines.
- Communicating about and disseminating the research both within UM and beyond.

### 1.2 Theme

The current call invites proposals relating to one or more of the following themes and sub-themes aligned with UM's educational philosophy and today's challenges:

- Creative PBL formats optimising CCCS
- Global Citizenship and transdisciplinary education
- Staff and student wellbeing
  - Work/study load, Smarter Academic Year

- Educational culture
- Advising & mentoring

### 1.3 Benefits for staff

In support of UM's Reward and Recognition programme, the education research grants represent an expression of appreciation for passion and dedication of UM staff. In addition, they offer various benefits, such as:

*Staff professional development via:*

- Developing knowledge that enhances teaching and student learning
- Developing interdisciplinary research skills
- Connecting with colleagues interested in education research and innovation at UM as well as internationally.
- Gaining experience that can serve as a stepping-stone for future grant applications (e.g., Comenius, NRO SoTL)

*Staff contributing to advancement of education practice at UM and beyond via:*

- Communication of findings to the UM teaching and learning community via EDLAB and faculty events and channels
- Dissemination via relevant (SoTL or disciplinary education research) journals

## 2. Practical information

### 2.1 Who can apply

EDLAB sees the value and efficacy of diverse perspectives and expertise in learning as well as in education research, and therefore encourages UM staff in all disciplines and roles to participate and collaborate in the scholarship of teaching and learning. The education research grants are intended particularly to support staff with sincere interest but limited prior experience in education research. This includes staff with established careers in disciplinary research who want to diversify their research skills and topics.

**Main applicants** are UM academic and support staff who identify as any of the following:

- Teaching staff interested in becoming more scholarly in their educational practice, and possibly pursue careers in education innovation and research.
- Other academic or support staff (including those with mentoring and advising roles) who want to engage in a more scholarly approach to their work.
- Early-career education researchers (PhD, postdoc, assistant prof.).
- Experienced researchers in a discipline other than education.

**Co-applicants and supporting team members** may be more experienced in education research than the main applicant; this is to encourage knowledge exchange and the development of mentor-mentee relationships.

*Requirements*

- Proposals are submitted by teams comprising the main applicant and one co-applicant. Supporting team members can be added as well.
- Teams should represent at least two different UM faculties or expertise centres (e.g., Student Service Centre, Staff Career Centre, University Library, Diversity & Inclusivity Office, Academic Affairs, etc.).

- The main applicant is solely responsible for communication with EDLAB, project progress, deliverables and financial management.

#### *Restrictions*

- One main applicant and one co-applicant per proposal.
- Individuals may be main or co-applicant on only one proposal per application round.
- Main and co-applicant(s) must each have an employment contract for at least 0,5 FTE at UM for the duration of the entire project.
- Main applicants may be prior EDLAB innovation grant winners.
- Main applicants may *not* be prior EDLAB education research grant or Learning & Innovation grant winners.
- Co-applicant(s) may be prior EDLAB innovation grant (EDUgrant), EDLAB education research grant, and/or Learning & Innovation grant winners.
- Research questions of the current project must clearly differ from those investigated in the previous EDLAB grant project(s) of the main and co-applicants.
- The call is not open to EDLAB employees.
- The call is not open to colleagues strongly affiliated with EDLAB (e.g., members of EDLAB boards/steering groups or EDLAB secondments).
- The call is not open to students as main or co-applicants (see the Student Advisory Board for project options. Contact [lena.gromotka@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:lena.gromotka@maastrichtuniversity.nl)).

## 2.2 Application deadline

Friday 17 April 2026, 12:00 CET

Please send proposals to [a.pan@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:a.pan@maastrichtuniversity.nl)

## 2.3 Timeline

Date	Phase
Monday 9 February 2026	Publication of the call
Thursday 12 February 2026	Workshop: Introduction to education research
March 2026	Workshop: Education research design & methods
Friday 17 April 2026, 12:00 CET	Application deadline
2 <sup>nd</sup> half of May 2026	Publication of results and feedback by e-mail
June 2026	Publication of winning project videos
September 2026-September 2027	Project period
June 2027	Progress presentation at UM Education Days
Winter 2027-Spring 2028	Communication of results and findings

## 3. Selection and administration

Education research proposals will be reviewed by the EDLAB Education Research Sounding Board, consisting of education researchers from all faculties, the EDLAB director and the EDLAB coordinator for education research. The board will make the final selection of winning proposals and is at the liberty to take the following principles into account:

#### *Interdisciplinarity*

With project proposals of equal quality, the assessment committee holds the right to make a final selection that enables collaboration across more faculties/disciplines/perspectives.

#### *Encouragement of staff with minimal prior experience in education research*

With project proposals of equal quality, the assessment committee holds the right to make a final selection that advances main applicants with minimal prior experience in education research. This means that preference will not be given based on either the main applicant's research experience in another discipline, or the lack thereof.

#### *Connection with education practice/innovation and theory*

With project proposals of equal quality, the assessment committee holds the right to make a final selection that demonstrates a clear link to education practice/innovation, while also being embedded in theory and earlier studies conducted in the field of education research.

### 3.1 Assessment criteria

EDLAB applies the following assessment criteria:

#### *Relevance of topic*

The proposal concerns a topic with relevance in the context of both educational theory and practice, and it demonstrates clear added value for UM education.

#### *Research questions and study design*

The proposal presents clear and answerable research question(s) grounded in educational literature, which is detailed in a resources list. The proposal describes a clearly defined and well-designed methodological approach, appropriate for addressing the research questions and feasible given the proposed timing and budget. The proposal presents a vision/plan for sustainability beyond the current funding.

#### *Quality of the project plan*

The proposal is coherently written and stylistically sound. It presents a project plan including an overview of deliverables, timeline, resources, and a simple budget overview.

#### *Dissemination and communication*

Grant recipients are expected to share their project proposal and the project outcomes with the UM research and teaching community. The proposal indicates preferred communication and dissemination formats (e.g., publication in a scientific journal, article in EDLAB magazine edUMinded, blog and/or social media posts, video testimonial, presentation at an EDLAB event such as Research-Meets and UM Education Days).

#### *Professional status and 'about the applicant'*

The proposal includes a short description of the main applicant's current position, identifying professional activities in relation to education (e.g., teaching, research, advising, support roles), inspiration/motivation for conducting education research, and how the applicant wants to develop themselves on the basis of this specific project. Where relevant, the proposal also mentions which of the co-applicants and/or team members will be participating in a mentoring role.

### 3.2 Grant budget allocation

The proposal can be based on a budget of up to €10,000, -. The money will be transferred to a budget number as communicated by the main applicant. The main applicant is fully and individually responsible for the budget allocation and budget management. Budget can for example be used for: teaching buy-out (to be discussed with the department chair of the applicant), a reduction of tasks, hiring student assistants, use of equipment/technology (max. 20%), or ordering catering for focus groups. EDLAB expects a responsible expenditure of the budget in direct relation to the deliverables

and goals of the project proposal. EDLAB welcomes additional matching funds from within the faculty or other UM stakeholders.

## 4. Research communication

Winning grant teams will be requested to:

- Record a short video in which they introduce themselves and explain their project to the UM community. Please note that the videos will be published on EDLAB's website and shared on social media channels.
  - See this example video from a previous EDLAB education research grant winning team: [https://www.instagram.com/p/DE7iePXvk\\_O/](https://www.instagram.com/p/DE7iePXvk_O/).
  - Watch this guide on EDLAB's YouTube channel for tips to create your own project video: <https://youtu.be/ykRidCI82Sc?si=ihtzNDZbKSlGS6JT>.
- Present their project and any updates during the UM Education Days and/or other community events in 2026-2027.
- Present their findings and evaluation of the project during the UM Education Days or other EDLAB community events/in writing in 2027-2028.

## 5. Resources

Grove, M., & Overton, T. (Eds.). (2013, December). *Getting started in pedagogic research in the STEM disciplines*. University of Birmingham.

Meijerman, I., Wijsman, L., & Kirschner, F. (2024, September 3). *Utrecht roadmap for scholarship of teaching and learning (UR-SOTL)*. Universiteit Utrecht.

Rowland, S. L., & Myatt, P. M. (2014). Getting started in the scholarship of teaching and learning: A "how to" guide for science academics. *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education*, 42(1), 6–14. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bmb.20748>

[Click here for direct links to these and other related guides and resources](#)

## 6. Contact

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