



## ThinkAchieve Grants: Enhancing Critical Thinking & Experiential Learning

*ThinkAchieve* is UTC's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for SACS reaccreditation. The QEP focuses on the development of student critical thinking skills through in-class activities and experiential learning opportunities. The *ThinkAchieve* grant program provides small grants to fund the development, implementation, and assessment of course activities designed to enhance critical thinking.

Course activities that encourage critical thinking may involve active learning in the classroom such as innovative hands-on or interactive experiences involving technology or exposure to campus or community partners. Experiential learning engages students beyond the classroom in projects that encourage them to apply their knowledge and skills in a practical setting. ***An essential component of experiential learning is that students engage in [critical reflection](#) before, during, and after the experience.***

### Eligibility and Grant Cycle

The *ThinkAchieve* grant program is open to individuals and small teams of UTC faculty and staff, and projects must be connected to a specific course. Collaboration across departments and with community partners is encouraged. All part-time and full-time faculty and staff are eligible to apply.

Applications are accepted on a monthly basis. Once awarded, funds should be spent by the end of the term of your award (fall, spring, or summer; or academic year, if a year-long project).

### Budget Requirements

The standard funding limit for this grant is \$2,000. However, funding requests above \$2,000 will be considered for comprehensive projects with strong assessment plans that specifically demonstrate quality enhancement for student critical thinking.

Grant funds may be requested for: materials and supplies, specialized software and technical support not ordinarily provided by the department, expenses related to the implementation or administration of the project, assessment fees, honorariums for speakers and community partners, student travel expenses, and conference travel for the primary applicant to disseminate *ThinkAchieve* project findings. If the assessment plan involves the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT), expenses related to this test must be included in the budget; please budget \$30 per test (each copy of the test costs \$6 and grading of each test costs \$24). *Note: Conference travel expenses cannot exceed 25% of grant request.*

The following items may *not* be included in the budget request: the repair of major equipment, the purchase or upgrade of standard software for which the University already has a license, and the updating of general course materials.

Funds must be used to augment the regular educational program, not to substitute funds or services that would otherwise be provided during the time period in question.

### **Program Requirements**

- Submit a progress report and final report. Due dates for reports are specified in the award letter based on the project's timeline. Report forms are found on the *ThinkAchieve* webpage. Assessment data of student learning are required as part of the report.
- Present the completed project at a campus-wide seminar, UTC's Research Day, or at the Instructional Excellence Retreat. Other venues may be considered on a case-by-case basis. The presentation should provide a description of the project, student learning assessment data, and how *ThinkAchieve* funds were used to support the project.
- **NOTE: If final reports are not submitted or do not include agreed upon assessment data, or a presentation of the project is not scheduled, awardees may not be eligible for complete or future funding.**

### **Selection Criteria and Process**

Proposals will be considered on a monthly basis by an inter-disciplinary committee using the criteria shown in the rubric on the next page. Proposals should be submitted using the *ThinkAchieve* grant form to [wctl@utc.edu](mailto:wctl@utc.edu) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Applicants will be notified within 30 days of award status. Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate plans for sustainability of the grant-enabled element and therefore meet the requirements for Experiential Learning Designation (if applicable) or otherwise clearly demonstrate such plans through evidence of continued capacity after *ThinkAchieve* funds have been used.

*ThinkAchieve Grant Proposal Evaluation Rubric: **Funded proposals must fully achieve all criteria in the rubric.***

Criteria	Does Not Achieve	Somewhat Achieves	Fully Achieves
<p>Project activity demonstrates an effort to enhance and/or measure student critical thinking.</p> <p>If applicable: Experiential learning project and plan for student critical reflection is presented clearly.</p>	<p>This project does not demonstrate an effort to enhance and/or measure student critical thinking.</p>	<p>This project has potential to enhance and/or measure student critical thinking, but needs to be more carefully planned.</p> <p>If applicable: This project includes experiential learning, but a more detailed description is needed, and/or there is no plan for student critical reflection before, during, and after the experience.</p>	<p>This project clearly demonstrates an effort to enhance and/or measure student critical thinking.</p> <p>If applicable: The experiential learning for this project is well defined and there is a plan for student critical reflection before, during, and after the experience.</p>
<p>Linkage to ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes</p>	<p>There are no links to ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes.</p>	<p>There is little connection to ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes, or the connections are unclear.</p>	<p>There are clear and specific connections to at least 3 ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes.</p>
<p>Itemized budget and justification</p>	<p>There is no itemization of the budget and/or there is no justification indicated for the budget items.</p>	<p>The budget is itemized but is not reasonable or does not adhere to the allowable expenses listed in the guidelines. The justification is not adequate.</p>	<p>The budget is itemized, the expenses are allowable and reasonable, and the justification is acceptable.</p>
<p>Plan for assessment</p>	<p>There is no assessment plan or the assessment plan does not evaluate the ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes.</p>	<p>The assessment plan is described, but a rubric is not attached and/or the plan is not adequate to demonstrate that ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes are being met.</p>	<p>The assessment plan is fully described, a rubric is attached (if applicable), and the plan is adequate for assessing the ThinkAchieve student learning outcomes.</p>