



PCI Foundation

2024-2025 Proposal Guidelines

Questions? Call Ray Clark at
(708) 386-3715 or email
ray.clark@pci-foundation.org

How to Write a PCI Foundation Grant Proposal



All PCI Foundation Grants must be executed as a partnership between a University school of architecture, engineering or construction management and a local precast industry partner (i.e, PCI Certified precast plant or regional PCI Chapter), with the grant funding going directly from the PCI Foundation to the school or school's foundation. Therefore, it is crucial that every proposal be written in partnership between the school and the industry partner.

THE FOCUS FOR A PCI FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL IS ON STUDENT OUTCOMES AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The following items will be required:

Name of faculty and partner coordinators and their titles, university or company, address, email and phone number. Additional partners and participants may also be listed on the cover sheet.

Introductory Notes

The introductory notes should include the following sections:

- Executive summary including student outcomes
- Financial commitment requested & length of grant (per year and total grant) from the Foundation

Executive Summary

Start with your executive summary to introduce the idea behind your proposal and give a few examples of how it will work and the student outcomes you expect in 200-400 words. The executive summary is the single most important piece of your proposal. Spend time on it and make sure that it is clear, concise, and understandable. Include your goals for the program.

When writing the PCI Foundation proposal, please keep the focus on student outcomes. While the PCI Foundation values a school's reputation and prospects, that information is often "boilerplate" text that can be included in the addendum. The proposal focus should be why the school is a good fit with the PCI Foundation.

Examples of what you might include:

- How will you partner with the PCI Foundation and industry partner/s?
- Is there a history of working with industry, or a school administration change asking for a focus on industry partnership?
- How can our industry help you bring more value to your students' educational experience?
- What does your school offer to the PCI Foundation that we may not be getting elsewhere?

DEADLINES

December 1 2024

Preliminary Proposal

February 1 2025

Draft Proposal

March 1 2025

Final Draft

April 2025

Recipients Announced

Other Required Sections

The remainder of the proposal (3-5 pages) must include the following sections and information.

Overview of New Curriculum Being

Developed/Program Description – The PCI Foundation prefers that new curriculum include 400/500 level courses, but often has found that new curriculum is developed for other courses leading up to the precast-specific material being taught.

Additionally, preference is given to experiential learning, curriculum integration and industry partnerships.

Some other items that might be included in this section:

- Sequence in which concepts are presented
- Integrated programming (between schools or departments)
- Research (only via pedagogy / teaching)
- Creating multi-media open educational resources
- Self-directed learning for students (creating walking tours, sharing their project summaries, student videos, competitions etc.)

Involvement of local industry partner – Every new grant requires close involvement with the local industry partner. The partnership should start prior to initiation of the grant, beginning in the proposal stage.

Qualifications of Faculty & Commitment of Instructors - Please include a short assessment of faculty and instructors who will be part of the program.

Student Learning Goals - What are the overall goals for student learning with this grant? These goals should be formulated with both the curriculum needs of the university and the industry needs of the precast industry and local partner/s.

Some examples of goals for student learning might include:

- Precast/prestressed concrete design basics
- Knowledge of local & national precast resources
- Cooperative learning
- Industry involvement
- Critical thinking
- Online learning opportunities (PCI Academy)

Statement of Perceived Impact of the Program Please share how you feel the PCI Foundation grant will impact the school, the precast industry, your students, and your community.

Instructional methods and activity types supported

- The proposal should share the activities you plan and methods you plan to use to reach your goals for student learning. These may include items such as:

- Integrated curriculum/ collaboration
- Community engagement
- Big Beam Competition
- Project Precast Competition
- Design studios
- New precast videos
- Mentorship programs
- PCI Chapters / Precast Clubs
- After Hours “Boot Camp”
- Plant tours
- Project tours (finished or in progress)
- Design competitions
- Professional firm partnerships
- Small projects
- Teaching models
- Travel to PCI Convention
- Guest lectures
- Poster session
- Senior projects
- Design charrettes
- Webinars

Assessment/adjustments/reporting: The PCI Foundation typically provides a multi-year grant in order to allow curriculum to be assessed and adjusted over the life of the grant. Your grant application should include information on how this will be approached. Plans for making reports to the PCI Foundation – will you do a written report, videos, photos, student blogs, Facebook page, website, social media, etc.?

Continuity: Please describe plans for continuity of the program - what will happen when the grant is finished? Will the program continue? Will precast industry relationships be maintained?

Budget Information: A summary of the proposed budget for the program must be included. The budget request must include total amount requested and spell out how much you wish to receive each year.

Community Partnerships: Additionally, if there is to be a non-precast community partner, please share information about that partner in the grant proposal.

Addendum

In addition to the required information above, you may attach an addendum to the proposal which may include some of the following items. (these may be added as a PDF)

- Faculty CVs (1-2-pages suggested)
- Team bios
- University and departmental overview (quality and reputation)
- Related faculty articles and research courses
- Expanded course descriptions /learning objectives
- Examples of prior coursework
- Current association memberships

Letters of support - Please include letters of support from any of the following (these may be added as PDFs):

- School administration
- PCI Regional Association
- Industry partners
- Local precast fabricators
- Precast industry suppliers
- Others as appropriate (community partners)

For questions on how to develop a proposal - call Ray Clark at (708) 386-3715 or email ray.clark@pci-foundation.org

Included with almost every PCI Foundation Grant Proposal are letters of support from the academic institution and the local industry that hopes to work with the school receiving the grant. The partnership between industry and school is the key component to every PCI Foundation grant - we place that relationship high on the list of criteria of what we look for in a worthy proposal.

Before writing a letter of support, a local partner and the school should already know each other. While every specific detail for the program might not be worked out - the general idea of what will happen after the grant is awarded should be agreed upon by both the faculty and the industry partner. A great support letter specifically provides:

- **Identify the players** - who will be involved with the program, what will they do and how much time will they spend, let us know your point of contact?
- **Pinpoint the resources** you plan to use to support the program
- **Spell out in-kind support** you will provide - materials, books, literature, plant tours, etc.
- Provide information on your previous and future **support of the PCI Foundation**
- Share how the program will **support your local needs** - will you hire graduates? Will they work for consultants who design with your products locally? What does it mean to you?

The easiest way to do all of these things is to work with your Trustee Liaison and local partner to make sure that all the questions are answered and that you format the proposal in a way that makes it easy to read and understand.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is my institution eligible for a grant from the PCI Foundation?

A. The intention of the PCI Foundation is to seed new programs at institutions of higher learning. We have envisioned these programs to be part of a school of engineering (civil or structural), architecture, or construction management. However, the PCI Foundation Trustees will consider a program application from any department where understanding the fabrication, design, construction, or business of precast/prestressed concrete is the focus of the program.

Q. Can I apply for a grant to run a course that already exists at an institution?

A. The expectation is that the PCI Foundation will fund NEW programs. So a regular semester-long course on precast design that has been offered in the past would probably not be funded. However, adding new elements to the program such as a seminar that is open to the public, big beam competition team, plant tours, classroom lectures by industry guest speakers, site visits, or design competitions would make a program more likely to be funded. It all depends on the total program.

Some schools have found the PCI Studio or Instruction program to be a good place to study the integrated design process – and have included programs in both the architectural and engineering schools at the same time.

Q. What kinds of activities will the PCI Foundation support?

Activities that have previously been part of programs sponsored by the PCI Foundation include (but are not limited to):

- PCI-Certified plant tours
- Hands-on casting of precast elements
- Tours of form liner manufacturers or other precast supplier partners
- Big Beam Team competition
- USDOE Solar Decathlon entries
- Touring architectural or engineering firms affiliated with precast projects
- Precast construction site visits
- Guest classroom lectures by industry professionals
- Travel to precast plants and projects outside of the U.S.
- Desk reviews for student designers
- Mid-term and final reviews of student work by industry partners
- Public forums to show student work to community
- One-on-one consultation with precast specialty engineers
- Project site visits
- Seminars open to the public

Other programs may also be supported. The amount of support will depend on the activities scheduled, the number of faculty members involved in the program, and other factors. Each proposal is rated on its own merits.

Q. Will the Foundation support prestressed research?

A. The PCI Foundation looks forward to awarding research grants to forward-looking research once resources for that support become available. We see this happening several years down the line. If you have a research project that you feel may be a candidate for a grant, please contact the PCI Foundation for more information.

Q. What should I do first?

A. An important element of any studio or instructional project proposal is the partnership between the institution and a local partner. Identify all the parties that will be involved with the program (dean and professor from the institution and a local PCI region, PCI-certified plant, or precast specialty engineering firm). Once the players are in place, some lively discussions should take place about all parties' expectations. What does the University need for the program curriculum to make the program feasible? What are expectations of the local partner? Who will provide books and literature? What kind of project is an appropriate focus for the program? How will the program be evaluated by all the partners?

Once you have established how the expectations will be met, download the Guidelines for Instructional Project Proposals from the PCI Foundation website. Contact Ray Clark at the PCI Foundation about a time frame for submitting a proposal. Each proposal is considered by the PCI Foundation Board of Trustees.

Ray Clark can also set up conferences with professors of existing programs or local partners if you would find that useful.

Q. How can an academic institution identify possible partners?

A. Your appropriate partner or partners will vary based on your institution's circumstances and your interests. In previous programs, the partner has been either a PCI Region or a PCI-Certified Producer (or both, preferably). Visit the PCI website at PCI.org for more information about precasters in your area, or contact Ray Clark at the PCI Foundation for suggestions.

Q. What is the time frame for submitting a proposal?

A. A final grant proposal is due March 1. The PCI Foundation Board of Trustees considers proposals between March and April every year.

Q. Are there certain other expectations that each program must meet?

A. The PCI Foundation strives to create a collegial atmosphere between itself, the professors, and students in our academic programs. In every case, the PCI Foundation asks professors and some of the students to be active in PCI events and meetings. This typically includes a student poster session at the PCI Convention, a professor-led session at the PCI Convention, and other opportunities to present the work of the student at national and regional meetings. Other items that the Foundation likes to have included: photos of the programs, video when possible, a way to connect with students who are part of the program in order to evaluate the program, and information on curriculum and events.