

### **RFP MIDAS-LA: Learning Analytics Challenge Thrust**

One of the primary missions of the University of Michigan Institute for Data Science (MIDAS) is to foster innovative and groundbreaking multi-disciplinary research in data science across the three U-M campuses. MIDAS will launch major research initiatives in data science in the following four thrust areas:

- 1) Transportation Science;
- 2) Learning Analytics;
- 3) Social Science;
- 4) Health Science.

Up to \$10M of funding will be awarded to proposals in these Challenge Thrusts based on a competitive process involving submission of a white paper, followed by invitation to submit a full proposal. A total of 8 proposals will be funded at a level of approximately \$1.25M each. A successful research proposal will involve a multi-disciplinary team engaged in research that will both have disruptive impact on a relevant thrust application and significantly advance the methodological foundations of data science. The ultimate intent of the MIDAS challenge initiatives is to stimulate research activities that can be leveraged into successful external funding proposals from government, private foundations, or industry.

Examples of topics that could be addressed in a **Learning Analytics** proposal might include one or more of the following.

1. Multi-modal capture: collect data relevant to learning behavior in both in person and online environments.
2. Multi-modal assessment: analyze learner expertise in both in person and online environments.
3. Creating big data enabled learners: building systems which allow students, faculty, and staff to analyze and visualize data while answering their own questions.
4. Personalized education: using data to support individual educational pathways adapted to learner background, identity, goals, and state.
5. Social network characterization and intervention: learning how to create portraits of student interaction networks, understand their impact on outcomes, and put this knowledge to use through visualization.
6. Expertise to data: building and putting to use asynchronous advice and mentoring tools which create community connection.

A successful proposal might develop methodological approaches complementing the **Learning Analytics** application that apply to one or more of the following: 1) massive integration and harmonization of complex heterogeneous data. 2) scalable active learning and causal inference; 3) human-in-the-loop

learning and analytics; 4) adaptive anomaly detection; 5) dimensionality reduction for visualization of complex data; 6) embedded systems for data mining, computation, learning and control; 7) distributed, cloud-enabled and interoperable algorithms. These are only a sample of possible approaches that could be considered.

Timeline:

- Oct.-Nov., 2015: information and team-forming session
- Nov 30, 2015: white papers due
- Dec 15, 2015: full proposal solicitations communicated
- Jan. 18, 2016: full proposal due
- Feb 15, 2016: awards announced

#### **Town Hall Meetings:**

MIDAS will conduct two town hall meetings on the Learning Analytics Thrust to provide more information and to allow potential collaborators to meet:

- Wednesday, October 21, 2015, 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. - 1109 François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) Building
- Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m- Kalamazoo Room, Michigan League

#### **White Paper Format & Requirements:**

White papers should not exceed 5 pages (excluding budget and biographical sketches) and be structured as follows:

Title page (1 page). Proposed title, abstract, names and affiliations of co-PI's and senior investigators, and contact information for the PI.

Technical description (maximum four pages). Problem to be addressed and technical approach to solve problem. Nature of data to be collected/analyzed/managed. Methodology to be applied and analytical tools to be used or developed. Data Science Services and computational infrastructure to be used, e.g. CSCAR and UM Flux or cloud resources. . Description and justification of team, including partners from industry or other institutions (cannot be part of budget). Expected impact of research resulting from the project.

Draft budget. Approximately \$1.25M total for three years can be requested and should be broken down yearly. The Associate Deans for Research (ADR) of all colleges or schools in which the co-PIs and senior investigators hold their primary appointments should be sent a copy of this white paper.

Biographical sketches. Two page bios of each of the co-PIs and senior investigators should be attached. These bios should have a paragraph stating the strengths that the co-PI brings to the proposed project, a reverse chronological list of the co-PI's education and employment history, honors and awards, and a

list of the 5 most relevant publications to the effort, a list of other related publications, and other support. While there is no specific format requirement, either NSF or NIH formatted biosketches would be acceptable.

To submit white papers: [midas.umich.edu/rfp](https://midas.umich.edu/rfp)

**Full Proposal Format & Requirements:** (by solicitation only)

Full proposals should not exceed 11 pages (excluding references, budget, biographical sketches, and letters confirming cost sharing) and be structured as follows:

Title page (1 page). Proposed title, abstract, names and affiliations of co-PI's and key investigators, and contact information for the PI.

Technical volume (maximum 10 pages). Sec. 1 Technical description. Sec. 1.1 Problem to be addressed and the challenges faced. Sec 1.2 Nature of data to be collected/managed/analyzed. Sec. 1.3 Technical approach proposed to solve problem, including methodology to be applied and analytical tools to be used or developed. Sec. 1.4 Expected impact on technology, science, and society. Sec. 2 Resources. Sec. 2.1 Databases or data collections to be used, and IRB, FERPA, and HIPAA issues to be addressed, if applicable. Sec 2.2 Data science services and computational resources to be used, including CSCAR and UM Flux or cloud resources. Sec 3 Data management and dissemination plan. Sec. 4 Description and justification of team, including partners from industry or other institutions (cannot be part of budget).

References. (no page limit).

Budget. A detailed budget (totaling approximately \$1.25M total for three years) broken down yearly and showing the cumulative budget, in addition to a budget justification. Note that there will be no indirect costs.

Biographical sketches. Two page bios of each of the co-PIs and senior investigators should be attached. These can be updated versions of those included in the white paper.

Letters confirming cost sharing.

*For Ann Arbor participants:* ADRs of the schools and colleges in which the co-PI's and senior personnel hold primary appointments should provide letters confirming a commitment to cost sharing, collectively covering 50% of the total requested budget for the Ann Arbor component of the proposed effort.

*For Dearborn and Flint participants:* No letters are required; UM will work with representatives from these campuses' research office and colleges to assess the availability of funding.

### **Review process and review criteria**

The white papers and full proposals will be reviewed by a panel of experts. The panel will review each proposal according to the following criteria: 1) relevance to the stated thrust area; 2) impact or likelihood of the project to result in innovative creation and/or application of data science methodology; 3) complementarity to existing projects at UM and contribution to the development of reusable and lasting data science capacity on campus; 4) multi-disciplinary coherence of team; 5) likelihood that proposed work will lead to significant and sustained extramural funding. 6) substantial involvement of students.

### **Post-award expectations**

Projects participants are expected to be strongly engaged with MIDAS and all co-PI's and senior investigators are expected to become active affiliate members of MIDAS. In addition, all teams will be expected to: 1) submit yearly reports on progress towards the aims of their grant; 2) participate in a yearly review, organized as a workshop for all co-PI's on all projects funded under the MIDAS Challenge Thrusts; 3) maintain an active project website; 4) actively work with MIDAS to enhance data science at U-M, e.g., through hosting DS student interns, and participating in targeted industry outreach. It is expected that all grant-derived publications acknowledge MIDAS.

### Contact Information:

[midas-rfp@umich.edu](mailto:midas-rfp@umich.edu)

MIDAS: <http://midas.umich.edu>

RFPs: <http://midas.umich.edu/rfp>