



Learning Facilitator Program

A Compiled Reference Guide

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About the Learning Facilitator Program

The School of Engineering Learning Facilitator Program is an investment in student learning, engagement, retention, and success across engineering pathways. The program embeds trained student facilitators into selected courses so students have more opportunities to ask questions, practice course concepts, engage with peers, and build confidence and belonging. The initiative is designed as a partnership among faculty, Learning Facilitators, departments, and the Dean's Office, with a shared focus on measurable outcomes, timely support, and continuous improvement.

Learning Facilitators (LF) may include Peer Learning Facilitators (PLFs), Teaching Assistants (TAs), or other approved student support roles depending on course and department needs. While role expectations may vary by employment type, the central purpose remains the same: to strengthen student learning and engagement without replacing faculty instruction or independent academic judgment.

Program Goals and Measures of Success

The program is intended to support stronger learning outcomes, increase student engagement, improve retention in the School of Engineering, support movement from pre-major to major status, and contribute to improved graduation outcomes. Long-term success may be reflected through reduced DWF rates, improved retention, higher transfer-to-major rates, and stronger graduation outcomes. Early indicators of impact may include improved attendance, fewer missed assignments, greater participation in class and supplemental learning opportunities, increased use of office hours or recitations, and stronger feedback loops among students, Learning Facilitators, and faculty.

Success Criteria (Lagging Metrics)	Early Signs of Impact (Leading Indicators)
- Decline in DWF rates (Drop, Withdraw, Fail) - Increased retention within the School of Engineering - Higher transfer-to-major rates among pre-majors - Improved graduation rate	- Increased student engagement (attendance, fewer missed assignments) - Higher participation in class, recitation sections, supplemental instruction, and office hours - Early, frequent, and appropriate assessments of learning built into courses - Improved feedback loops between students, PLFs, and faculty

Program Priorities

Learning Facilitator support is prioritized for courses where additional structured peer support can have a meaningful effect on student success. Priority areas may include larger courses, gateway or early-sequence courses, foundational courses that students typically complete in the first or second year, courses serving pre-major students, and courses where departments identify clear learning, engagement, retention, or equity-related needs. Departments requesting support for smaller courses or additional resources should be prepared to explain the need and describe how the support will improve student learning and engagement.

Larger Classes: Priority will be given to courses with enrollment over 50 students, as these often benefit most from additional peer support. For smaller classes, departments should make a clear case explaining the need for a PLF.

Pre-Major vs. Major: As of this writing, there are nearly twice as many undergraduate students in pre-major status as in major status, and it is expected that resources will roughly reflect the student population.

Teaching Assistant (TA) Considerations: TAs are graduate students. TAs generally support grading, course logistics, or lab supervision, and often have responsibility for sections of a course. If a course already has a TA or requires one, the department should present a case and rationale explaining why a TA is needed and how the PLF role, if also used, will complement or differ from the TA.

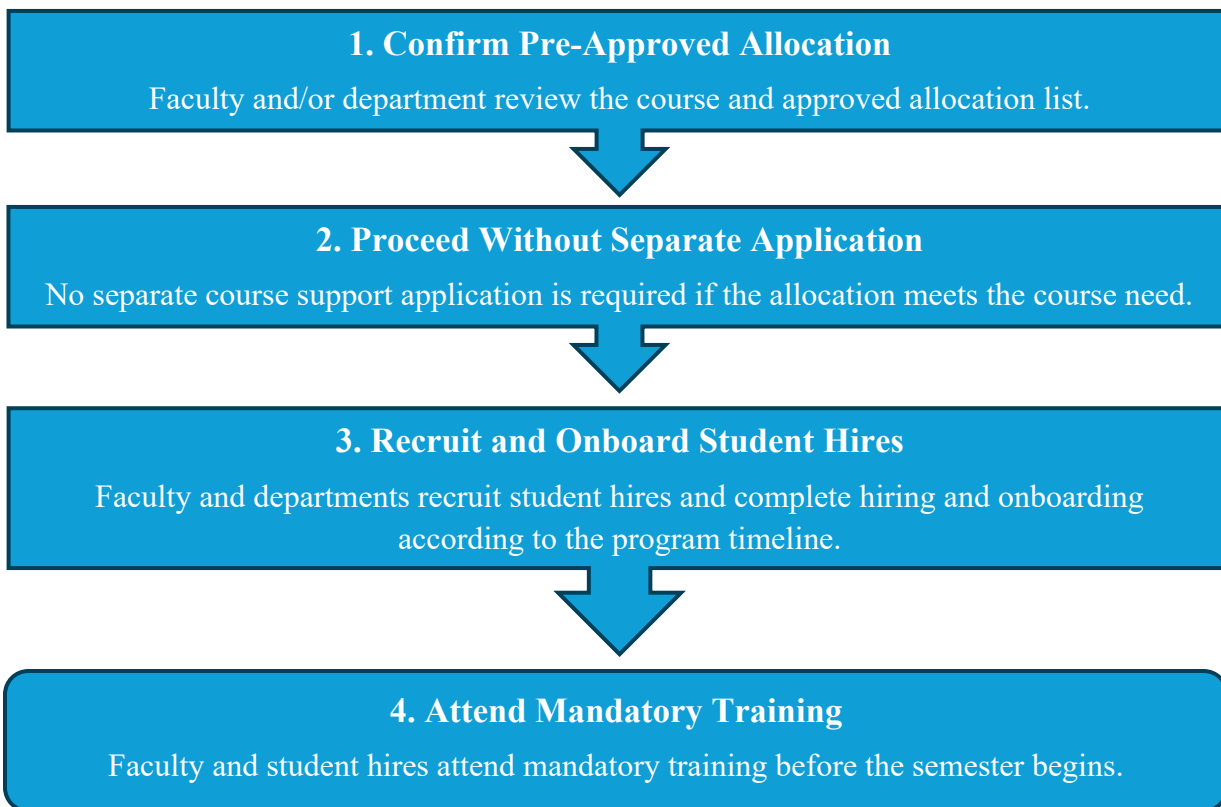
For more, see OAP graduate assistantship types here: <https://oap.unm.edu/graduate-student-assistantships/assistantship-information.html>

If your proposal is to use other employment categories such as Instructional Assistant, please indicate that below and consider whether the IA will perform duties more akin to a PLF or a TA. Note that grading support alone (e.g. a Grader position) is unlikely to stand out among applications as making a strong case for improving students' learning outcomes or retention.

Course Support and Allocation Process

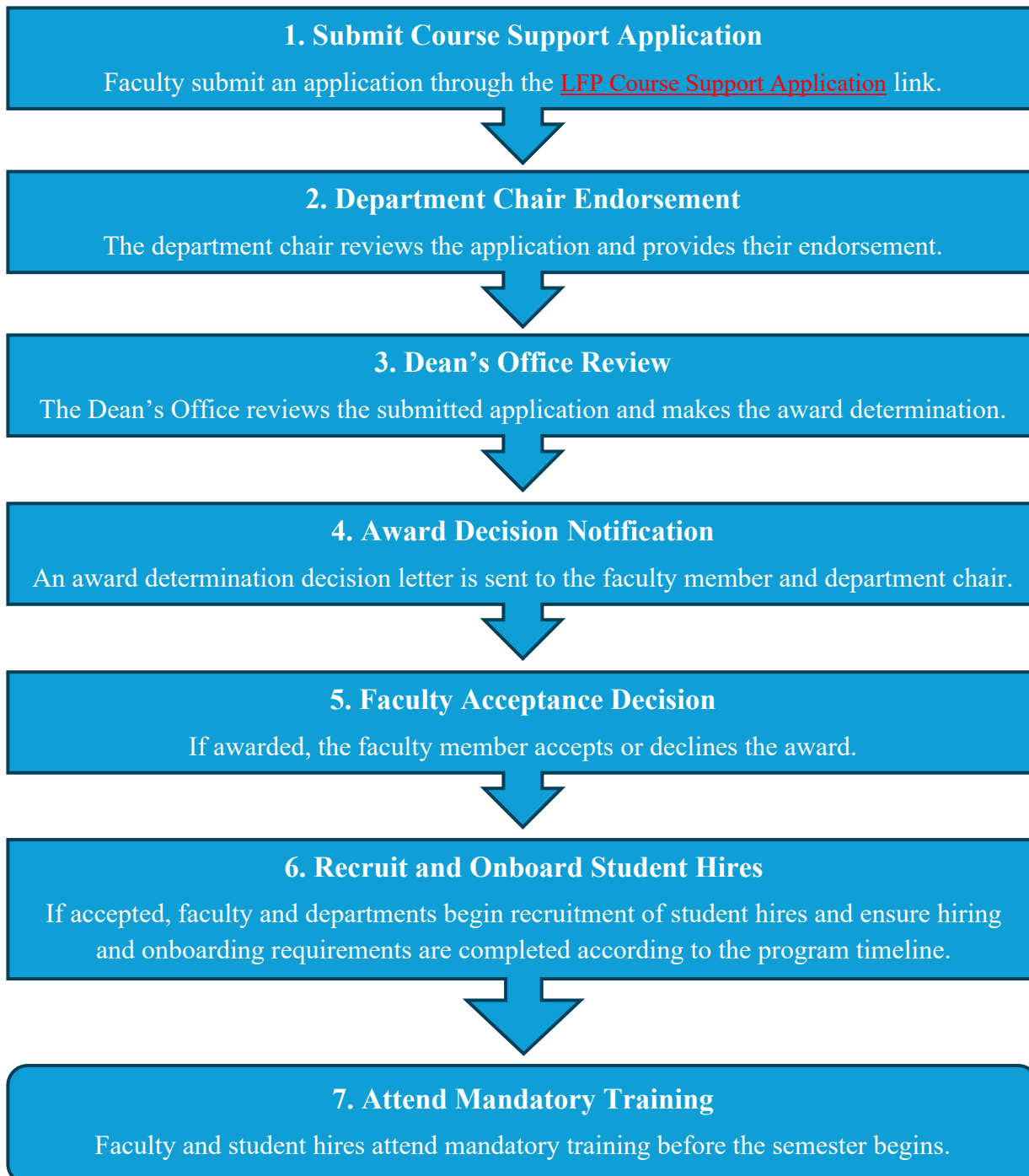
The School of Engineering may use a pre-approved course and allocation process to identify courses and PLF/TA resources in advance. The pre-approved course and allocation list will be uploaded on this webpage so departments and faculty can reference current approved courses and resource allocations. This approach helps reduce bottlenecks, supports earlier planning and hiring, and avoids requiring faculty to submit repeated applications when courses and allocations have already been identified. See the Scenario 1 flow chart for a quick visual overview of the process.

Scenario 1: Course Is Pre-Approved and No Allocation Changes Are Needed



If a course is not included on the pre-approved list, or if a department or faculty member needs an exception to the resources beyond the pre-approved allocation, the faculty and department chair will need to follow the process as shown in the Scenario 2 flow chart visual below.

Scenario 2: Course Is Not on the Pre-Approved List or the Listed Pre-Approved Course Requires Allocation Changes



Faculty and Course Instructor Expectations

Faculty play an essential role in ensuring the LF program is effective. This is a partnership, and the following expectations are designed to keep the collaboration smooth and meaningful. It is important to note that **PLFs are NOT merely for grading assignments or evaluating student work**. Instead, their focus is on fostering student engagement and supporting learning as described above. Faculty whose courses receive LF Program support, whether through the pre-approved list or through a separate approved request, are expected to:

- Meet regularly with Learning Facilitators to align support with course needs and student progress.
- Meaningfully embed LF activities into the course, either in class, in recitations, in labs, through study sessions, or through other supplemental learning structures.
- Provide guidance, feedback, and appropriate supervision so Learning Facilitators understand expectations and boundaries.
- Use LF observations and student feedback to make timely adjustments that support learning.
- Participate in training, Community of Practice activities, and required reflection or reporting processes.
- Embed the three-cycle PERTS Ascend Student Survey and use program support to interpret results and identify responsive actions.

Community of Practice

All participating faculty and student hires are expected to engage in the Learning Facilitator Program Community of Practice. The Community of Practice creates a shared space for regular check-ins, reflection, resource sharing, problem solving, and continuous improvement across supported courses. A dedicated Canvas course supports this work by providing activities, prompts, resources, survey support, and opportunities to discuss what is working, what challenges are emerging, and how the program can better support student learning.

PERTS Ascend Student Survey Process

Supported courses are expected to use the three-cycle PERTS Ascend Student Survey to better understand student belonging, engagement, and learning experiences. The first cycle is intended to gather early feedback, the second cycle supports mid-semester reflection and adjustment, and the third cycle provides end-of-course feedback on the student experience. Program staff provide information, training, and administrative support for survey setup, rollout, and interpretation. The Community of Practice also creates opportunities to discuss results and identify practical, timely responses.

Recruitment, Hiring, Onboarding, and Participation

Faculty/course instructors are responsible for recruiting, hiring, and onboarding the Learning Facilitators assigned to their courses. To facilitate this process, the Dean's office will support with SoE-wide student job announcements and develop a PLF Talent Pool database as a starting point for recruitment.

Faculty and departments are welcome to recruit beyond the PLF Talent Pool database, including students identified through faculty recommendations or other departmental outreach, as appropriate. We encourage faculty to review the talent pool database once it is available to identify candidates whose experience aligns with their course needs and plans for using PLF support. The database may also help broaden opportunities for students who have expressed interest in serving as Learning Facilitators. Faculty should contact their department administrators for access once the database is available.

Faculty and hiring departments are responsible for ensuring that Learning Facilitators are hired and onboarded in a timely manner. Once onboarding is complete, faculty and Learning Facilitators are expected to attend the mandatory LF Program training, participate in the Community of Practice, support the PERTS Ascend survey cycles, and complete any required reflections or reports.

Work-Hour Expectations

As part of the program's work-hour expectations, one PLF award corresponds to **10 hours of work per week**. PLF student hires should plan their schedules accordingly, as each PLF appointment is limited to 10 hours per week. One TA support allocation represents **0.5 FTE**, which is equivalent to **20 hours per week**.

Reflection, Reporting, and Continuous Improvement

The program uses reflection and reporting to support continuous improvement. Learning Facilitators may share weekly or periodic reflections describing activities, student engagement, and support strategies. Faculty may share early observations, assessment results, engagement patterns, planned adjustments, and end-of-semester reflections on course outcomes. These reflections help the program understand impact, identify effective practices, and strengthen future implementation.

Peer Learning Facilitator Profile and Expectations

Peer Learning Facilitators (PLFs) are typically students who have successfully completed the course or have strong relevant preparation. Faculty are encouraged to consider students who demonstrate not only content knowledge, but also persistence, communication skills, approachability, and the ability to support peers. Students who experienced challenge in the course and developed effective learning strategies may be especially well positioned to help current students navigate similar challenges.

- Facilitate peer learning, study sessions, recitations, labs, or active-learning activities as appropriate for the course.
- Foster collaborative learning, connection, belonging, and confidence among students.
- Track participation and engagement in ways that help identify students who may need additional support.
- Share observations with faculty to guide timely interventions and course adjustments.
- Attend required training, participate in reflection activities, and engage in the Community of Practice.
- Maintain confidentiality, professionalism, and clear communication with students, faculty, and program staff.

Role Boundaries: What Peer Learning Facilitators Do Not Do

Peer Learning Facilitators are not intended to replace faculty instruction, make independent grading decisions, or serve as graders. They should not create new graded content, develop major assessments, set grading policy, substantially revise course content, or act without regular faculty guidance and supervision. Their role is to support learning, engagement, and belonging within the boundaries established by the course instructor and program expectations.

For-Credit PLF

When a PLF role is structured for credit (2 credits course), allowable activities may include course development and reflective teaching work under faculty guidance, such as building or modifying worksheets, studio prompts, Canvas modules, templates, or short learning-support materials. In some cases, for-credit PLFs may help design or deliver limited class segments, project-support sessions, or design critiques with faculty guidance and oversight.

TA Considerations

Teaching Assistants may have different duties, such as grading support, course logistics, lab supervision, or leading sections, depending on appointment type and applicable policies. When both PLFs and TAs are used, departments should clarify how the roles differ and complement one another. Please see [OAP](#) and the governing CBA for full information on duties.

Important Links and Resources

Use the links below to access current program materials, request forms, and related guidance. Placeholder links should be replaced with the final URLs before the page is published.

- **Pre-approved course and allocation list:** [Pre-approved course and allocation list](#)
- **Request additional resources or an exception:** [LFP Course Support Application](#)
- **Program Timeline and due dates:** [LFP Timeline](#)
- **Student Peer Learning Facilitator application:** [PLF Talent Pool](#)
- **Graduate assistantship information:** Refer to the [Office of Academic Personnel graduate assistantship information](#) for guidance on assistantship categories and related expectations.
- **Peer Learning Facilitator information:** Refer to the University's [Peer Learning Facilitator information](#) for broader PLF role context and support resources.
- [Learning Facilitator Program brochure](#)

Program Inquiries

For questions about the Learning Facilitator Program, course support, additional resource requests, student hiring, training, or Community of Practice participation, please contact:

Learning Facilitator Program Contact: Dr. Sajjid Budhwani, Program Manager, School of Engineering. Email: sbudhwani@unm.edu. Office Location: School of Engineering, Centennial Engineering Center #3057; Building 112.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Learning Facilitator Program?

The Learning Facilitator Program embeds trained student facilitators into selected School of Engineering courses to support student learning, engagement, confidence, and belonging.

Who can receive Learning Facilitator support?

Courses may be identified through a pre-approved course allocation process, departmental planning, or an approved request for additional support. Priority is generally given to courses where LF support can meaningfully strengthen student engagement, learning, retention, or progression in engineering pathways.

Do faculty need to apply every semester?

Not necessarily. When a course and allocation are included in the pre-approved list, faculty do not need to submit a separate application. Requests are generally needed only when a course is not listed or when additional resources are being requested beyond the approved allocation.

What do Learning Facilitators do?

Learning Facilitators support active learning, peer engagement, study sessions, recitations, labs, student check-ins, and communication with faculty about student learning needs. Their role is to strengthen learning and belonging, not to replace instruction.

What are the work-hour expectations for PLF and TA support?

One PLF award corresponds to **10 hours of work per week**, and PLF student hires should plan their schedules accordingly because each PLF appointment is limited to 10 hours per week. One TA support allocation represents **0.5 FTE**, which is equivalent to **20 hours per week**.

Are Peer Learning Facilitators graders?

Peer Learning Facilitators are not intended to serve as independent graders. They may support course activities under faculty guidance, but faculty retain responsibility for grading decisions, assessment standards, and course instruction.

What is the Community of Practice?

The Community of Practice is a shared learning space for participating faculty and student hires. It supports regular check-ins, reflection, activity sharing, resources, and discussion of what is working across supported courses.

What is the PERTS Ascend Student Survey?

The PERTS Ascend Student Survey is a structured feedback process used to better understand student belonging, engagement, and learning experiences. Supported courses use a three-cycle model to gather feedback early, at mid-semester, and toward the end of the course so faculty and Learning Facilitators can identify responsive actions during the semester.

How can students become Peer Learning Facilitators?

Students interested in serving as Peer Learning Facilitators should review the current position information and complete the student application when it is available. Departments and faculty may also identify students who are well-positioned to support peers in specific courses.