

Innovate@BU

2018 Call for Research on the Boston Entrepreneurial & Innovation Ecosystem

Boston University's campus-wide initiative Innovate@BU is seeking scholars, students, post-doctoral students or faculty interested in engaging in original research that furthers knowledge of Boston's entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem. Boston is often ranked as one of the top 5 entrepreneurial ecosystems in the world, in line with cities like New York, London, and Tel Aviv. Boston University holds a prominent place within that ecosystem and the ecosystem is experiencing dramatic change. In the last twenty years, there has been an inversion of activity as [entrepreneurs and innovators that once gathered in the areas surrounding route 128](#) move into the city. With new corporations like [General Electric](#) and Amazon relocating to the city, the city has begun extensive planning efforts to [imagine Boston in 2030](#).

Boston University is interested in furthering research that explores how entrepreneurs, innovators, investors, ideas and capital affect the historical, on-going and future vitality of our ecosystem. To truly understand ecosystem vitality, both traditional economic indicators (e.g., business starts, capital, revenue, valuation, etc.) as well as noneconomic indicators (e.g. social networks, shared perception of vibrancy, human capital, policies or programs, etc.) may be relevant. For example, an ecosystem can be measured in terms of entrepreneurial quality ([Guzman and Stern, 2015](#)) or its density, fluidity, connectivity, and diversity ([Bell-Masterson and Stangler, 2015](#)). We are open to approaches that compare Boston's ecosystem with other cities and are agnostic about disciplines, methods and data sources. We welcome proposals that include statistical, experimental, ethnographic or field methods and encourage novel approaches that make use of new data sources or methods. Sample research questions might consider:

- **Measurement and Data** - What indicators, data or techniques foster measurement of our entrepreneurial ecosystem? How can public and private data sources be integrated to enhance ecosystem measurement? How can cities like Boston assess their progress over long periods of time?
- **Industry Differences** - How do different sectors in the Boston entrepreneurial ecosystem evolve differently? (for example medical devices vs software) What role does intellectual property play in explaining differential rates of growth? How cohesive is the ecosystem? How are different industries distributed?
- **Human Capital** - What changes have Boston's creative, scientific technical workforce experienced? How have patterns of immigration affected innovation and entrepreneurship? How do learning opportunities and institutions affect the entrepreneurial and innovation aspirations and success of students of all ages? How is the role that universities play changing?
- **Access** – How do different groups engage with the entrepreneurial ecosystem? What roles do the elderly or underrepresented minorities engage? How do the challenges of female and male innovators and entrepreneurs differ? What types of barriers affect entry into entrepreneurship? How have failure rates for different groups changed?
- **Resources** - How are the resources and capital available to innovators and entrepreneurs changing? How are maker spaces, incubators, innovation centers and accelerators shaping the ecosystem? How do these resources interact?

Eligible Expenses

Research awards will be made based on the actual direct research costs submitted and allocated directly to the principle investigators. We cannot reimburse faculty or students for their time, but will make awards based on direct research expenses such as technology, travel, licenses, data, applications, transcription, or experiments. Research awards may range from \$500 to \$5,000 depending on proposed research expenses.

Eligibility

Faculty, graduate students, post-doctoral students at Boston University. Undergraduates are eligible with the support of a faculty advisor. Collaboration teams that include at least one Boston University affiliated author are eligible.

Research Output

Authors retain ownership of their work and are expected to seek scholarly publication. Authors may be selected to contribute to a report on the Boston entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem or to present their work at a Boston University research conference at a later date.

Submission Format and Guidelines

Proposals will be due May 15, 2018. Email proposals to innovatebu@bu.edu. Proposals should include:

- A clear description of the empirical and theoretical research gap researchers aim to address
- An appropriately scoped research question
- An explanation of the research methodology and data sources that will be used to address that question
- A research budget listing direct expenses and timetable for execution
- Plans for research dissemination via conferences and other publications
- Short biographies of the principal investigators