

# Recruiting DAT Departments

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## Overview

Discussing the idea of forming a DAT in a department is an exciting process, and one that involves a bit of a dance between prospective facilitators and departmental education champions and leaders. DAT Digital Toolkit materials can help facilitators explain the DAT model to departmental members. The dance often begins a meeting with the chair, followed by a meeting with the faculty.

One frequently used tool during these meetings is the DAT Model Overview, Digital Toolkit Slides 2.1-2.9. These modifiable slides cover how DATs are structured, the roles of facilitators, examples of past DAT outcomes, and the DAT Life Cycle. Facilitators project them during introductory faculty meetings, and also attach them to emails for chairs and prospective DAT members to peruse. The slides can be customized to fit any department's interests and context.

## Request for DAT Proposals

This postcard was mailed to all faculty at the CU Boulder to raise awareness about the DAT program and solicit applications for new DATs.

Align the Curriculum

Restructure Course Sequence

Build a Sense of Community

Improve Student-Faculty Relationships

Support Diversity & Inclusion

Assess Disciplinary Skills Across The Major

Student Career & Professional Development

Make Department Space More Welcoming

**BECOME A CHANGE AGENT**

**CREATE SUSTAINABLE DEPARTMENTAL CHANGE**

**Departmental Action Teams**  
Now Accepting Applications for Fall 2018



## Carpe Diem, Start a DAT!

A Departmental Action Team is an externally-facilitated working group of four to eight faculty, staff, and/or students that is created by a department to achieve two goals:

- Create sustainable change around a broad-scale issue related to undergraduate education in the department by shifting departmental structures and culture.
- Help team participants become change agents through developing facilitation and leadership skills.

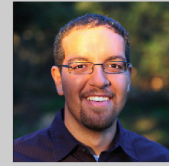
Departments have revitalized their curricula, strengthened their communities, and improved their climate by organizing Departmental Action Teams. Any department member can initiate an application. We're happy to meet with you before the deadline to discuss applying for a DAT.

**Application Deadline: Friday, Aug. 10, 2018**

**[bit.ly/CUDATapplication](http://bit.ly/CUDATapplication)**



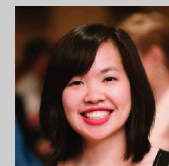
[colorado.edu/project/dat](http://colorado.edu/project/dat) | [dat-info@lists.colorado.edu](mailto:dat-info@lists.colorado.edu)



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## DAT Application

The following guidelines were linked to publicity about the request for DAT proposals. It outlines the DAT Project and provides a framework for how to draft a successful proposal. It can be modified for use at any university.

### DEPARTMENTAL ACTION TEAM PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

#### Overview

This is an opportunity for faculty, students, and staff interested in improving undergraduate education in their department and gaining skills in creating change to gain support in doing so through the creation of a Departmental Action Team (DAT). Departments in the Colleges of \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are eligible to apply. Depending on DAT funding, we will select 1-2 departments to begin new DATs in Fall 2019. Extra weight will be given to applications from Engineering and Humanities, because neither of these units have formed a DAT in the last two years.



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**Application Deadline:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Website:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the DAT model?** A Departmental Action Team (DAT) is an externally facilitated working group of about 4 to 8 faculty, staff, and/or students that is created by a department to achieve two goals:

- to create sustainable change around a broad-scale issue related to undergraduate education in the department by shifting departmental structures and culture *and*
- to help DAT participants become change agents through developing facilitation and leadership skills.

Thus, DATs support their participants not only in making meaningful, positive change in their department, but also in developing their own capacity to continue leading change in the future. To meet these goals, the DAT is supported by external facilitators who have expertise in STEM education, facilitation, organizational culture, and education research. Additionally, a core feature of DATs is that participants choose their DAT's focus; in the past, these have included both curricular concerns (e.g., restructuring a course sequence) and cultural concerns (e.g., improving undergraduate sense of belonging). DATs are part of an NSF-sponsored Improving Undergraduate STEM Education (IUSE) project between CU and Colorado State University.

**DAT Structure:** A DAT consists of a self-selected group, ideally drawn from all constituencies within the department. The focus of the DAT is chosen by participants after the DAT's formation, based on shared interests. DATs generally meet regularly for sixty to ninety minutes every two weeks, for two or more semesters. Between meetings, participants can assign their own "homework" and schedule additional meetings as necessary.

**Incentives for DAT Members:** For faculty and staff, department chairs typically agree to count participation in the DAT towards service credit for faculty and as part of performance reviews for staff. Additionally, our grant provides funding for stipends for students participating in the DAT, and snacks for everyone at DAT meetings.

**External Facilitation:** External facilitators play critical roles in the DAT. These facilitators bring expertise in educational research, institutional change, and supporting collaborative groups. Their primary goal is to create an environment in which DAT participants are likely to achieve success. In practice, this includes keeping the group organized, helping the group create a shared vision and set concrete outcomes, seeking evidence to guide decision-making, attending to interpersonal tensions, and introducing conversational tools and collaborative norms to help the group function effectively. To support a departments' long-term success, facilitators introduce DAT participants new skills and



tools that they can use in other contexts in their department, thus increasing the department's overall capacity for creating sustainable change in the future.

### The Proposal

Anyone can apply for their department. Only one submission is allowed per department, but team submissions are encouraged. Proposals should be no longer than 3 pages. Structure it according to the table below. Please submit your proposals by \_\_\_\_\_ to the DAT project team at [dat-info@lists.colorado.edu](mailto:dat-info@lists.colorado.edu). While there is no formal pre-submission process, we strongly recommend setting up an appointment with a member of the DAT Project Team to discuss your developing proposal. Contact the DAT project team at [dat-info@lists.colorado.edu](mailto:dat-info@lists.colorado.edu) to set up an appointment.

Component	Details
Applicant(s)	Who are you, and what is your role in the department?
History	What formal or informal efforts has your department (or individuals) made to improve undergraduate education or climate?
Rationale	How do you think a DAT will benefit your department, especially given previous reform efforts and your understanding of the DAT model?
Membership	Who are likely DAT participants? Consider all department members: faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students. A more formal membership process will occur if awarded.
Project Ideas	What are some potential foci for the DAT (keeping in mind that foci are formally decided upon by DAT members only after formation)?
Resources and Support	What resources can your department offer to support a DAT (e.g., service credit for faculty, time at faculty meetings)? Who do you expect to be "champions" (i.e., influential, active supporters) of the DAT (e.g., the department chair, a dean)? What synergies may the DAT find with other individuals or units on campus?



**Review Criteria:**

Successful applications will demonstrate:

1. An understanding of how essential features of the DAT model will be expressed within the context of your department.
2. That there are multiple participants (faculty, staff, and/or students) willing to engage in the two components of DAT model: enacting department-level change and developing individual capacity as change agents.
3. That there are adequate resources for the DAT to be successful (e.g., support from the department chair and/or college administrators, appropriate incentives for participants, mechanisms for good communication between the DAT and the greater department).

**What to expect after submitting a proposal:** We expect that the application review process will take about a week. At that time, semifinalists and their department chairs will be invited to meet with the DAT project team to discuss the departmental culture and history, the principles underlying the DAT project, and next steps. After that meeting, a final decision will be made as to whether to proceed with a DAT in that department.

**Expectations of DAT Departments:**

1. Listening Tour: The DAT facilitator(s) will conduct a “listening tour” among department members, which will consist of a series of interviews about departmental history, climate, and attitudes towards undergraduate education. This listening tour helps facilitators understand the department prior to starting the DAT.
2. Evaluation measures: The DAT project is a research project. As such, the DAT researcher team will distribute online pre and post surveys to departmental faculty and staff, and conduct one hour post interviews with DAT members. External evaluators may conduct interviews or focus groups with DAT members, the department chair, and relevant college administrators.
3. Ownership of Project Work: DAT members are expected to be active, invested participants. This includes working outside of DAT meeting times, contributing to documentation of their work, and being supportive colleagues to fellow DAT members.
4. Share expertise: DAT members are expected to engage with colleagues within their department in support of the DAT’s work. Additionally, DATs are expected to send representatives to annual campus-wide DAT events where they can share their work with and learn from other DATs. DAT members will also have the opportunity to attend other optional poster sessions, panels, and workshops relevant to their projects.

