

FLEX Project Guidelines *Spring 2022*

FLC DESCRIPTION:

The Federal Lab Consortiums (FLC) mission is to promote, educate and facilitate federal T2 among its member labs and institutions in order for them to reach their commercialization goals, and create social and economic impacts with new innovative technologies. More specifically, FLC facilitates federal laboratories, industry partners, entrepreneurs, and academic institutions with their T2 goals and missions through FLC-created tools and services to provide introductions, information, and an accessible path for members to get their technologies from lab to market. As part of the facilitate goal of FLC, the Federal Lab Education Accelerator (FLEX) program was developed.

FLEX DESCRIPTION:

The mission of the Federal Lab Education Accelerator (FLEX) is to facilitate long-term collaborations between federal laboratories and academic institutions to allow for greater access to federally invented technologies for market assessment necessary for commercialization. This program promotes innovation and collaborative work through the resources available within the Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC). FLEX connects entrepreneurial students in MBA programs with federal labs' technology portfolios, offering select licensable technologies as the subject of an entrepreneurial element of a business course. Students will walk away with market research experience with real federal technologies, while the labs will benefit from the analysis on their technologies within a business landscape. This pilot program is meant to bridge the gap between federal labs and entrepreneurs, serving as a collaboration between federal high-tech and higher business education.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

FLEX represents an additional resource, which is made available within the curriculum of already established business course. Academic institutions selected to participate offer relevant subjects that address aspects of technology evaluation, intellectual property (IP) assessment, customer discovery, and market and price assessment. As each course is different at each institution, some or all these aspects will be addressed. At the beginning of the course, students will first select a federal lab technology that aligns with their background. Students will rank their top three choices based on the list of technologies provided within the FLEX portfolio. Professors will provide their students technology choices to the FLEX

program manager who will send them to respective tech transfer manager (TTM) for review and approval. TTMs are representatives from labs who oversee and manage the technologies in their lab's portfolio.

If more than one team selects the same technology, it is up to the TTM to decide how many teams they are willing to accept per technology per semester. Once the TTM reviews and approves the students' choices, the FLEX program manager will notify the professors and students of the approved technology choices. Next, after the match between student and lab is made, the student will meet with a TTM from the lab that holds their chosen technology to gain a better understanding of the technology. This meeting will allow the student to ask technical questions before engaging in tech analysis for their course. Project work will vary from course to course depending on the syllabus and the specific requirements of the professor. Throughout the course, students will have access to lab TTMs for technical questions they have. Students will also be able to speak to the inventor of the technology, if available. Students are expected to offer a final comprehensive deliverable to the lab in exchange for access to the technology and experts. This partnership is non-exclusive and does not prohibit academic institutions from pursuing relationships with other federal labs that work with or outside of FLEX, nor does it prohibit labs from pursuing partnerships with academic institutions who work with or outside of FLEX. In addition, there are no costs associated with participating for the labs or MBA programs. Participation in the FLEX program is voluntary and does not involve compensation.

Technology Selection Process:

1. The FLEX program manager will provide professors with a link to the FLEX portfolio with the selected federal lab technologies.
2. Professors will distribute the link to the students to pick their top three FLEX technology choices.
3. Professors will provide the FLEX program manager with the student's technology selections and description of their course's deliverable (PowerPoint, pitch, written recommendation, or report) etc.
4. The FLEX program manager will provide the technology transfer manager (TTM) with the list of students interested in their technology. If more than one team is interested in the same technology, it is up to the TTM to decide how many teams can evaluate the same technology. The number of students per team will vary between the MBA programs.
5. Once the TTM approves the technology selection, the FLEX program manager will notify the professors and provide the contact information of the TTM to give their students.

6. The students will be responsible for contacting the TTM to schedule the initial meeting. The FLEX program manager should be copied on all communications between the universities and federal labs.

Potential Outcomes:

While outcomes may vary based on the MBA program, likely potential outcomes include:

- Students will provide a full market assessment that the lab can use to license or co-develop the technology.
- Students will license the technology from the federal lab to start a company.

PARTNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:

For Universities:

1. Professor will introduce FLEX technology program and FLEX technology link to students.
2. Students will select their top three FLEX technology choices and submit their choices according to the technology selection process above. Professor will ensure this choice is made in a timely manner.
3. Students will schedule at least two meetings, one at the beginning and one during the semester with the TTM to understand the chosen technology. If students have additional questions throughout the course, they can email their questions directly to the TTM, but should copy the FLEX program manager on all communications.
4. If available, students will schedule a meeting with the inventor of the chosen technology according to the above communication plan.
5. Professors will clearly define course deliverables before the project begins. Deliverables can include, but are not limited to, a PowerPoint, pitch, written recommendation, or report.
6. Students are encouraged to present a final presentation to professors and relevant federal lab stakeholders.

For Federal Labs:

1. Federal labs will provide the FLEX program manager with their select technology portfolio to be shared with participating university course professors. Labs will remain in contact with the FLEX program manager regarding updates to their portfolios.
2. Labs should select mature technologies that are appropriate for this kind of assessment.

3. No financial contributions are required to participate in the FLEX program.
4. Federal labs will make members of their Tech Transfer Office, such as the TTM and inventor of the selected technologies, available to meet with students and provide guidance to ensure understanding of the technology.
5. The TTM must be available for a minimum of two meetings with each team that selects the technology from their portfolio. It is expected that TTMs meet with students before the project begins and once again, depending on student request.

Timeline:

- October 13th – FLEX participants receive and review guidelines.
- November 5th – Labs and universities will notify FLEX of their commitment to participate for Spring 2022.
- December 6th – Labs provide technologies to be included in FLEX portfolio.
- December 17th – FLEX portfolio will be made available to participating universities.