

Guide to Pre-College Course Proposals

Summer 2027



Introduction

Boston University Summer Term Pre-College Programs will welcome over 1300 academically ambitious and intellectually curious high school students from around the world in Summer 2027 to participate in intensive academic study on campus. The Pre-College Programs team seeks proposals for specially designed courses for high school students across a variety of subjects.

Summer Term Pre-College Programs seeks proposals for these specific program models:

- **Summer Challenge**, two-week seminars for academically ambitious high school students (entering grades 10-12 in Fall 2027) to **explore** two topics of their choice.
- **Academic Immersion**, three-week, single-subject intensive courses for high school students (entering grades 11-12 in Fall 2027) with an emphasis on **hands-on, experiential learning**.

All programs are taught on campus in an intensive format. Classes meet daily Monday through Friday (no classes on Monday, July 5). The intensive schedule allows instructors to earn additional salary yet still have a good portion of the summer remaining to dedicate to research, writing, and travel before or after their course.

For full-time BU affiliates, all Summer Term Pre-College Program teaching is considered supplemental. This means that it does not count toward contractual service obligations. Those in 12-month appointments, postdocs and anyone else requiring their department's approval to take on additional summer work should consult with their department supervisor, dean and HR staff regarding summer teaching, to be sure you are approved to take on additional summer work and income before submitting a proposal.

Both BU affiliates and non-BU candidates are welcome to submit a proposal.

Compensation

Summer Term Pre-College instructors will be remunerated based on the type and length of course they develop and teach. Minimum compensation levels are listed on the [Summer Term Job Opportunities page](#).

- In the case of a team-taught course, the course pay will be split proportionately based on each instructor's role.
- Compensation covers the development and delivery of the course, as well as attendance at any required pre-program trainings, planning meetings with program staff, and completing post-program student assessments.

Summer 2027 Program Details

Each program has a unique structure and schedule. **Please note that all 2027 dates are tentative** and will be finalized by November 2026.

Summer Challenge is held in three, two-week sessions.

	First Class	Last Class
Session 1	Monday, June 21	Friday, July 2
Session 2	Monday, July 12	Thursday, July 23
Session 3	Monday, July 26	Thursday, August 6

Each student is enrolled in two, two-hour seminars, one held in the **morning** (9:30-11:30am) and one in the **afternoon** (1-3pm). Seminar capacity ranges from 15 to 30 students. Each session of Summer Challenge has **10 class days**, with the last day of each session devoted to final presentations. For those topics in high demand, the same seminar may be offered in both the AM and PM time frames or offered in more than one session. Most instructors teach just the AM or PM seminar but may be hired for one or more sessions depending on availability and program needs.

Summer Challenge serves the widest age range of students (ages 14-17) and is the shortest program. Seminar content is less in-depth, with a focus on **introductory exploration** of academic disciplines. Each seminar is 19.5 instructional hours (9, two-hour classes plus 1.5 hours of final presentations). This is a great program for those with less teaching experience interested in developing their teaching skills.

Academic Immersion (AIM) is offered in two, three-week sessions.

	First Class	Last Class	Notes
Session 1	Monday, June 28	Friday, July 16	No class 7/5
Session 2	Monday, July 19	Friday, August 6	

AIM courses provide a deeper dive into a single topic and are usually only offered in one session. Each session has **14 or 15 class days**, with final presentations on the last day. The program schedule includes two hours of instructor-led class each morning 9:30-11:30am. After lunch, students engage in hands-on experiential learning from 1-4:30pm led by the instructor or other members of the teaching team (such as TF(s) or a co-instructor). The afternoon is also an ideal time for field trips, guest speakers and other activities that enhance learning.

The AIM program serves rising juniors and seniors (ages 15-17) and is more intensive than Summer Challenge, allowing for a deeper dive into a single subject. The AIM program is a great option for those interested in team-teaching but can be taught by a single instructor as well.

Structuring the Class Day: AIM

For AIM, the most common arrangement is that the morning session is direct presentation of new material, and the afternoon session is dedicated to supervised project/assignment time. Afternoon periods are also excellent times to have “office hours,” allowing participants the opportunity to get individual feedback on assignments or their course performance as needed. The afternoons may also be a time for additional instruction related to the course that the instructor has designed, such as guest speakers, site visits, or other special activities.

Because our students are minors, there is a higher level of supervision required than in an undergraduate environment. As an instructor, **you or another member of your teaching team must be present to provide supervision and support to participants during all structured academic times.** This is particularly true of the AIM program model, given the intensive schedule. When participants are working on assignments, someone is there to provide support and keep them on task. If a guest is speaking, a member of the teaching team should be present. If participants go on a course-related field trip, a member of the teaching team should accompany them but will also be supported by Program Assistants (residential staff).

Each instructional day will equate to around 5 to 5.5 hours of structured academic time, which is a mix of instructor-led teaching, structured assignment/project work (which participants can work on independently or in groups), and other co-curricular activities (field trips, guest speakers, etc.). The last day of the program is dedicated to final project presentations.

Because of this very intensive structure, it is important for AIM courses in particular to be designed with this schedule in mind. Instructional times should be broken up into smaller chunks, mixing some direct teaching, small-group or individual work or discussion, hands-on activities, etc. to keep students engaged. Active learning strategies and engagement opportunities are strongly recommended in your course plan. **In short, instructors should not be lecturing the entire time in any program.**

After the academic day is over, residential staff take over the supervision of students by organizing a range of social and recreational activities, and students can explore the Boston area in small groups. After dinner, participants may continue to work on academic assignments but are more likely to participate in additional social activities organized by residential staff, or simply enjoy socializing with their peers.

Things to Keep in Mind While Designing a Pre-College Course

Teaching a pre-college course is a great opportunity for those interested in deepening their teaching experience. Summer Term Pre-College instructors design and teach their own course for high school students from around the world who want to get a taste of life as a college student at a selective institution, and who are interested in exploring new academic subjects. Because these courses have no curriculum requirements (though some courses can have some high school prerequisites for admission), and are not a prerequisite for something else, **instructors are encouraged to be creative pedagogically** and to introduce their fields of study to bright, ambitious young minds.

In addition, the Summer Term Pre-College staff will provide **logistical and operational support for any co-curricular activities** you may choose to bring to the classroom — such as guest speakers, lab tours, etc. that you arrange — so you have the opportunity to really embrace innovation in the classroom and beyond it, as well as leverage personal and professional connections at BU and in the Boston area.

Pre-college programs allow participants to “test drive” the institution and help them make decisions about their future academic and professional paths. **We want to take this opportunity to “wow” them,** getting them excited about academic areas they have no opportunity to be exposed to in their home schools.

For participants, the program fees for these programs are all-inclusive, covering all instruction and educational materials, housing and dining, as well as costs associated with recreational and academic field trips or special events in the evenings and on weekends. **Summer Term Pre-College covers the cost of all instructional/course supplies** needed for your course. More details about course budgets will be provided to those hired.

Summer Pre-College participants apply to specific courses and are admitted based on their academic readiness for that course, as well as their particular interest in the course subject matter. Therefore, **they are already a self-selected group of motivated, eager learners and come to your class with a lot of interest in the subject area.** For instructors, this may be a wonderful opportunity to test out ideas for new undergraduate course curricula, as high school students often share similar interests with undergraduate students.

Course Design Considerations

All Courses

1. All pre-college courses and seminars should emphasize hands-on, active, and/or experiential learning wherever possible. **Emphasis should be placed on learning to do**, not just learning “about”. Topics should be accessible and interesting to pre-college participants.
2. All materials should be age appropriate for younger learners. When in doubt about the suitability of any course content for minors, please consult with the Pre-College team. In general, we advise **erring on the side of caution** and avoiding any material that may be too adult or potentially controversial.

For AIM

3. Don't be afraid to focus on **depth** rather than breadth.
4. You can **be ambitious** in terms of how much content you may be able to cover. Participants in AIM will be enrolled in only one program and will devote all of their time to just your course while attending. Therefore, they have a good deal of time to invest in the course and course work and will be able to cover quite a lot of content in a short period of time. **Overplanning** but paring back if needed is a much easier adjustment to make than underplanning and needing to scramble to create more content on the fly to fill course time.
5. AIM courses taught by multiple instructors working together, or that are centered on a “big question” or theme to which different disciplinary lenses may be applied, are also welcome. Interdisciplinary courses are not common in high schools but can be very appealing to younger learners. They also embody BU's strategic commitment to **convergent education** and research.

A note on technology

Participants are required to bring a laptop or tablet for academic work during the program, but please be explicit about technology needs for your course. Does it require a laptop, or would a tablet be sufficient? Are there university systems or software required to complete work in the course?

How Intensive Pre-College Courses Compare to Undergraduate Teaching

High School participants

Summer Term Pre-College courses are not “high school” courses, despite the age of the students enrolled in them. Program descriptions state clearly that high school participants are expected to tackle “undergraduate-level material” in their readings, labs, essays, and other assignments. At the end of the program, participants are asked to evaluate their courses along three primary metrics: was the course **enjoyable**, was it **interesting**, and was it **challenging**. Keep this in mind as you design your course proposal.

The intensive format means that the instructor has most or all of the participants' attention during the program; therefore, the instructor can depend on what was accomplished an hour ago to be remembered for the next hour or next day. This in turn allows projects to be extended from one day to the next, for example, giving a lot of flexibility.

In terms of what you can expect from them academically, the high school students who will be selected:

- are not very different from first semester, first-year students but may be **less mature**.
- may have the ability to take on undergraduate-level material but **need some additional scaffolding and explicit instruction** as they make the transition to working in an undergraduate environment, with its different expectations and structure.
- **specifically applied for the courses and seminars they are enrolled in**, so they bring carefully vetted academic qualifications as well as focused interest in the subject, making them exceptionally motivated and enthusiastic learners.

Attend the Information Session

Those interested in teaching for Summer Term Pre-College Programs are encouraged to attend the Information Session on **September 15, 2026, at 12-1pm** before submitting their proposal. This session will provide more information about the course proposal process, teaching younger students, overall program information, as well as the opportunity to ask questions of Summer Term staff. To register for the Information Session (which will be recorded for those unable to attend), visit the [Summer Term Job Opportunities page](#).

How to Propose a Summer Pre-College Course

Submit the online proposal form, which will require:

- **A current CV/resume.**
- **A draft course plan.** You may not have complete day-to-day details prepared at this stage but that's ok. The proposal is intended to give us an idea of what a final course would include. Instructors selected to teach will have ample time to more fully flesh out their proposals into final syllabi in consultation with Summer Term staff. All proposals should include the following:
 - **Course title**
 - **Course description** (around 100 words): Describe the course in non-technical language accessible to the proposed audience of pre-college students. Be sure to address **WHO** the course is for ("This course is for students interested in ...), and **WHAT** the course covers ("The course will include....") in terms of content.
 - **Learning outcomes** (around 100 words): Describe participant learning outcomes. What will participants **learn, understand, be able to do**, etc. as a result of completing this course?
 - **Course prerequisites, if any (AIM only)**: Prerequisites should be reasonable for high school students currently in 9th - 11th grade, and can be defined by course type (such as "AP/Honors Biology") or specific knowledge (such as "experience coding in Python, Java, or C++" or "object-oriented programming").
 - **Final project/assignment ideas**: Because our programs are not for credit, a final assignment, presentation, or other capstone project is helpful to keep participants motivated. Please describe ideas for a final project or presentation for your course.
- **Your program and session date preferences.** You may propose a course for any of our programs. You will need to select a first-choice program, but can note if you feel your course could work in other programs as well.
- **Pre-approval.** Before submitting your proposal, all BU affiliates who may require departmental approval to take on summer work should **get confirmation from your supervisor, department chair or HR representative that you are pre-approved to take on additional teaching duties and pay during the summer if your course is selected**. This can simply be a brief email that you can upload to the course proposal form, or email separately if you need more time to obtain it.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to have experience teaching high school students to be eligible to teach a pre-college course?

While we do require candidates to have some undergraduate teaching experience and prefer those who have also worked with younger learners, those who do not have experience teaching high school students but have strong interest in gaining that experience will receive full consideration.

Will non-BU affiliates be considered?

Yes, non-BU affiliates will be considered. A Master's degree (or equivalent) and previous teaching experience is required.

Are postdoctoral scholars eligible to submit a proposal?

Postdocs may teach if specific conditions are met. You must not be on a fellowship or other type of funding that explicitly restricts paid work beyond your postdoc, and your faculty supervisor must approve your involvement with the program in writing. Other restrictions may apply, so postdocs interested in teaching with us should consult with their home departments, supervisor, HR, ISSO (if applicable), and the Summer Term Pre-College Programs team before submitting a proposal.

Do I have to have a PhD to submit a proposal?

No, candidates do not need to hold a PhD to submit a proposal. A Master's degree (or equivalent) and previous teaching experience is required.

How do I fill so many contact hours per day in pre-college courses?

In such an intensive program, it is important to vary the type and style of academic engagement throughout the day, mixing direct instruction with small-group work, discussion, and actively engaging projects and assignments that can be initiated or completed by participants in class. Additional enhancements such as guest speakers, if arranged, should also be scheduled during the structured academic day.

Do Summer Term Pre-College participants have access to library resources?

Summer Term Pre-College participants all have BU IDs, and thus can access online library resources as well as the physical stacks.

Can you provide some examples of hands-on learning activities?

- Using LexisNexis to write a formal legal brief
- A mock trial or Model UN activity
- Sequencing a portion of a bacterial gene
- Curating your own museum exhibition
- Conducting an observational study of the psychology of crowds
- Pitching a new business idea to a panel of mock investors
- Peer-engagement activities such as a gallery walk, peer feedback, think-pair-share, etc.

Do I use Blackboard for my course?

Instructors are required to use Blackboard to support their course. Summer Term staff will provide support with site set up.

Will participants be provided ADA accommodations if requested?

Once applicants accept their offer of admission to Summer Term Pre-College programs, they may submit requests for accommodations. Disability and Access Services (DAS) will communicate with any instructors about classroom accommodations granted that may affect course planning and connect instructors with any additional resources to support participants' needs.

Will instructors be provided with course assistants?

Course assistants may be provided for courses based on program type, instructor needs, total enrollment, and availability of candidates for the positions. Summer Challenge typically does not provide assistants, but AIM can have TFs to support these more complex courses. Once a course is accepted for inclusion in our 2027 offerings, Summer Term Pre-College will consult with instructors about any content knowledge those assistants may need and may ask you to help us recruit candidates in your department. Course assistants may be undergraduate or graduate students depending on the expertise needed. For course field trips, Summer Term staff can arrange for Program Assistants (residential staff) to accompany the group, as required by BU's minors policy.

Submit your online course proposal form and all required materials no later than
12pm on **Monday, September 28, 2026:**

[CLICK HERE FOR THE 2027 SUMMER TERM PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS COURSE PROPOSAL FORM](#)

Candidates will be notified by early November whether their course has been selected to move on in the process. The Summer Term Pre-College Programs team will then work with you to finalize details regarding your course offering, and connect you with HR to confirm your eligibility and process your appointment.

Questions?

Contact us at summerhs@bu.edu to consult about your ideas.