7. Pathways for Participation (How to Enter the Garden)

The Innovation Garden is designed to be an open, accessible entry point into iLRN. Whether someone is exploring immersive learning for the first time or returning to develop more advanced work, the Garden offers multiple pathways for participation. This page provides a simple guide to help newcomers find their footing and returning contributors plan their involvement across the Garden's programs.

7.1 Start Here: Entry Pathways for New Participants

Newcomers typically begin through one of the following low-barrier options:

Attend an Innovation Garden Walkthrough

Walkthroughs provide guided tours of Garden Pods and active projects on the Virtual Campus.

- No preparation required
- Offers immediate exposure to design examples
- Ideal for understanding the ecosystem at a glance

Join a Guided Virtual Adventure (GVA)

GVAs introduce participants to immersive learning tools and platforms beyond Frame VR.

- Focused on exploration, not expertise
- Helps newcomers choose the right platform for future projects

Visit an Open Co-Creation or Coworking Session

Informal sessions where participants can ask questions, share ideas, or simply observe.

- A welcoming space to meet peers
- Helpful for early-stage thinking or identifying potential collaborators

These are the easiest ways to “step into the Garden.”

7.2 Intermediate Participation: Contribute or Experiment

Once comfortable, participants may choose to contribute more actively:

Create a Garden Pod

A small, structured space for showcasing a prototype, lesson idea, workflow, or early XR experiment.

- Works well for in-progress ideas
- Low risk, high learning value
- Ideal preparation for formal conference proposals

Lead or Co-Host a ToolShed Session

Share a technique, workflow, or platform tip.

- Short sessions (typically 20–30 minutes)
- Good for building facilitation confidence
- Helps strengthen community skills

Participate in a Maker Panel

Contribute to a moderated conversation about design decisions, methods, or project evolution.

- Useful for reflective practice
- Supports deeper learning across the community

7.3 Advanced Participation: Prepare Formal Contributions

For practitioners ready to formalize their work:

Join a Proposal Clinic

Receive guidance on shaping proposals for the iLEAD stream and other conference tracks.

- Clarifies expectations and required formats
- Helps refine ideas and structure
- Often leads to stronger acceptance outcomes

Prepare a Conference Submission

Contributors may develop:

- Workshops
- Demos
- Practitioner papers
- Panels or roundtables
- Exhibits or experiential showcases

These formal submissions often originate from work first shared in Pods, ToolSheds, or Walkthroughs.

7.4 Participation for Students and Early-Career Contributors

Students and emerging practitioners benefit from several tailored opportunities:

- **Join iLRNFuser Game Jams** to rapidly build skills
- **Develop Pods** to showcase early XR projects
- **Participate in GVAs** to explore platforms
- **Receive peer and mentor feedback** in moderated sessions
- **Create submission-ready materials** through Proposal Clinics

These pathways are designed to support both skill development and confidence building.

7.5 Faculty, Designers, and Organizational Partners

Educators and institutional partners can engage in ways that support curriculum and applied practice:

- Integrate Garden Pods into coursework
- Use GVAs as cross-platform literacy experiences
- Collaborate on ToolShed Sessions grounded in institutional tools or priorities
- Bring student cohorts to Walkthroughs
- Align capstone or applied research activities with conference pathways

The Garden is structured to support scalable, repeatable curricular integration.

7.6 Participation Beyond the Annual Conference

The Garden sustains year-round engagement. Contributors may:

- Join ongoing platform-specific workshops
- Co-design templates and repeatable workflows
- Support the development of design patterns
- Participate in Searchlight-informed exploration
- Assist with documentation and community moderation
- Collaborate across international chapters

These contributions strengthen the global practice community and maintain momentum across the entire 18-month cycle.

7.7 Summary: A Simple Path

Most participants experience the Garden in this order:

1. **Observe** → Walkthroughs, GVAs
2. **Experiment** → Pods, ToolSheds, Maker Panels
3. **Contribute** → Proposal Clinics, conference submissions
4. **Lead** → Facilitation, mentorship, program support

This flexible pathway helps practitioners grow at their own pace while supporting the iLRN community as a whole.

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