



**Grant Writing: A Recipe for Success**  
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**University of Wisconsin–Madison**

## **Introductions**

### **Overview of the Session**

#### **Grant-Seeking and Proposal Preparation Resources at WCER/UW (see handouts)**

- Overview: WCER proposal preparation website
- Grant seeking
  - WCER Grant Notification Service
  - Grant monitoring services
  - WCER seminars and Institute of Education Sciences webinars
  - UW-Madison Grants Information Collection (Memorial Library)
- Grant writing
- Human subjects guidance
  - UW Human Research Protection Program (HRPP)
  - HRPP seminars through the Graduate School

#### **Grant Writing: An Editor’s Perspective**


- Common pitfalls
- A few tips

#### **Grant Writing: A Researcher’s Perspective**

- A personal grant history/stories that can be told
- Grants as part of the academic career trajectory
  - When is grant writing strategic?
  - When is grant writing ill-advised?
  - How time invested can be beneficial, even if the grant isn’t initially won
- Types of grants and funding agencies (some examples):
  - Research
  - Methodology and statistics
  - Research literature reviews
  - Training grants (pre- and postdoctoral)

## **Questions/Discussion**



SKIP NAVIGATION | ACCESSIBILITY

AT THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

SEARCH

- ABOUT WCER
- NEWS
  - Events
  - Cover Stories
  - Research News
  - Press
- WHAT'S THE RESEARCH ON...?
- PROJECTS
  - All Active Projects
  - All Completed Projects
- PUBLICATIONS
- LECTURE SERIES
- PEOPLE
  - Staff Directory
  - Project Leaders
- ERG - EVALUATIONS
- RESOURCES GROUP
- RESOURCES
  - Conference Rooms
  - Equipment
- GRANT SERVICES
  - GNS
  - Proposal Preparation
- GRADUATE TRAINING
- SERVICE UNITS
  - Director's Office
  - Business Office
  - Technical Services
  - Copy & Mail
- EMPLOYMENT
- CONTACT INFO
- SEARCH
- STAFF LOGIN
- WORKSPACE LOGIN

[Home](#) > [Grant Services](#) > Proposal Preparation Resources

## Proposal Preparation Links & Resources

### Funding Opportunities

[WCER Grant Notification Service \(WCER-GNS\)](#) (available exclusively to University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty, researchers, and staff)

[IES Grant Writing Workshop](#) -- Lynn Okagaki, Commissioner for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences (September 12, 2008; video/Microsoft PowerPoint presentation)

[Seeking Funding From the Institute of Education Sciences: A Guide for WCER Researchers](#) -- Adam Gamoran, Director, WCER; John D. MacArthur Professor of Sociology and Educational Policy Studies (April 3, 2008; Microsoft PowerPoint presentation)

[The "Secrets" to Securing IES Funding: Some Lessons Learned as an IES Standing Panel Member](#) -- Geoffrey Borman, Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Educational Psychology, and Educational Policy Studies (April 3, 2008; Microsoft PowerPoint presentation)

[Extramural Funding in the Social Sciences and Education](#) -- Beth Graue, Professor, Curriculum and Instruction; Associate Director for Faculty, Staff, and Student Development, WCER (February 14, 2008; Microsoft PowerPoint presentation)

### WCER/UW Procedures

WCER Proposal Preparation Guidelines ([MS Word](#))

WCER Proposal Planning Form ([MS Word](#))

Request for Limited Principal Investigator (PI) Status ([PDF](#))

### Institutional Capabilities

Institutional Capabilities - Long ([MS Word](#))

Institutional Capabilities - Brief ([MS Word](#))

### Human Subjects

[Education Research IRB Web Site](#)

[UW-Madison Human Research Protection Program Web Site](#)

[Human Subjects Training Program](#)

[Human Subjects Training Verification](#)

[IRB WebKit](#) (login)

[Getting Started with the IRB WebKit](#)

[IRB WebKit Tutorial](#)

[IRB WebKit Instruction Manual](#)

[IRB WebKit FAQ](#)

[Request for Approval to Serve as Principal Investigator on UW-Madison Human Subjects Protocol](#)

[Consent Form Wizard](#)

### Research & Sponsored Programs (RSP)

[Proposal Lookup](#) (through 2007)

[Proposal Lookup](#) (login for WISPER)



**WCER Grant Notification Service (WCER-GNS)  
Notice 2009-12, September 1, 2009**

The Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER) routinely monitors grant opportunities in the education sciences. WCER-GNS is a grant notification service available exclusively to University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty, researchers, and staff.

Listed below are education grant opportunities that have recently come to our attention. If you're interested in submitting a proposal to any of these programs through WCER, please:

- Contact WCER Director Adam Gamoran as soon as possible ([gamoran@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:gamoran@ssc.wisc.edu); 263-4200)
- Review the WCER Proposal Preparation Guidelines posted on the WCER Proposal Preparation Web site
- Send Cathy Loeb ([cloeb@wisc.edu](mailto:cloeb@wisc.edu)) your completed WCER Proposal Planning Form, also posted on the WCER Proposal Preparation Web site

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**Title: International Research and Education: Planning Visits and Workshops (NSF 04-035)**

**Sponsor:** National Science Foundation

**Deadlines:**

- **Planning visit proposals: Proposals may be submitted at any time**
- **Workshop proposals: September 20, February 20, May 20, annually**

**CFDA No.:** Multiple, including 47.076 (Education and Human Resources)

**Program Description:** International Planning Visit/Workshop awards can support the initial phases of developing and coordinating integrated research and education activities with foreign partners. Individual proposals may be submitted for:

- *Planning visits* to assess foreign facilities, equipment, or subjects of research and to have detailed discussions with prospective foreign partners to finalize plans for cooperative research. Visits typically range from 7 to 14 days.
- *Joint workshops* designed to identify common research priorities, focused on a specific, well-defined area of research collaboration. U.S. and international co-organizers collaboratively design the agenda around a disciplinary or interdisciplinary theme and invite individuals who will uniquely contribute to the workshop's objectives. Workshops may be held at either a U.S. or foreign location. Workshop results should include recommendations to the research community about possible areas for future collaboration and should be broadly disseminated.

Support is primarily for travel and subsistence expenses; salaries and stipends are not typically supported. Support for workshops will be for a maximum of 2 years and a maximum total budget of \$60,000 over the duration of the award. Support for planning visits will be for a maximum of 2 years and a maximum total budget of \$20,000 over the duration of the award. It is expected that most award grantees will subsequently apply to disciplinary programs across NSF for support of the resulting collaborative research.

**Program URL:** <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04035/nsf04035.pdf>

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**Title: Discovery Research K-12 (DR K-12) (NSF 09-602)**

**Sponsor:** National Science Foundation

**Deadlines:**

- **Preliminary proposals (optional): October 5, 2009**
- **Full proposals: January 7, 2010**

**CFDA No.:** 47.076

**Program Description:** The Discovery Research K-12 (DR K-12) program seeks to enable significant advances in preK-12 student and teacher learning of the STEM disciplines through development, study, and implementation of resources, models, and technologies for use by students, teachers, and policy makers. DR K-12 invites proposals that meet a variety of educational needs, from those that address immediate and pressing challenges facing preK-12 STEM education to those that anticipate opportunities for the future. DR K-12 especially encourages proposals that challenge existing assumptions about learning and teaching within or across STEM fields, envision needs of learners in 10-15 years, and consider new and innovative ways to educate students and teachers. The DR-K12 program seeks proposals that address one or more of the following challenges in preK-12 STEM education: (a) How can improved assessment of student knowledge and skills advance preK-12 STEM teaching and learning? (b) How can all students be assured the opportunity to learn significant STEM content? (c) How can we enhance the ability of teachers to provide STEM education? (d) How are effective innovations successfully implemented, scaled, and sustained in schools and districts in a cost-effective manner? DR-K12 accepts proposals for four types of projects: (a) exploratory projects (up to \$450,000 for up to 3 years); (b) full research and development projects (generally: up to \$3,500,000 for up to 5 years; projects that study scale-up of STEM education innovations: up to \$5,000,000 for up to 5 years); (c) synthesis projects (up to \$250,000 for up to 2 years); and (d) conference and workshop projects (up to \$100,000 for up to 2 years). Estimated number of awards: 20-25 exploratory awards; 5-10 full research and development awards; 5-10 synthesis awards; and 5-10 conference/workshop awards.

**Program URL:** <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2009/nsf09602/nsf09602.pdf>

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**Title: Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering (REESE) (NSF 08-585)**

**Sponsor:** National Science Foundation

**Deadlines:**

- **Letters of intent (optional): October 9, 2009**
- **Full proposals: November 12, 2009**

**CFDA No.:** 47.076

**Program Description:** The goals of the REESE program are to (a) catalyze discovery and innovation at the frontiers of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning, education, and evaluation; (b) stimulate the field to produce high-quality and robust research results through the progress of theory, method, and human resources; and (c) help coordinate and transform advances in education,

learning research, and evaluation. REESE pursues its mission by developing an interdisciplinary research portfolio focusing on core scientific questions about STEM learning in current and emerging educational contexts, both formal and informal, from childhood through adulthood, and from before school through to graduate school and beyond into the workforce. In addition, research questions related to education research methodology and evaluation are central to the REESE activity. This program solicitation calls for three types of proposals: knowledge diffusion, empirical research, and large empirical research. *Knowledge diffusion projects* are small grants for the synthesis of existing knowledge on a topic of critical importance to STEM learning, education, and/or evaluation, or for the diffusion of research-based knowledge. *Empirical research projects* should identify areas that have the potential for advancing discovery and innovation in STEM learning. These projects are designed to support the collection of new empirical data or to conduct secondary analyses from existing state, national, or international databases. Such projects are expected to be based deeply in the STEM disciplines. *Large empirical research projects* will generally involve teams of multidisciplinary experts working on conceptually related projects. All REESE proposals must be responsive to one of two broad topical strands, emerging research or contextual research. Through *emerging research projects*, REESE challenges scholarly communities to put forward groundbreaking ideas, concepts, theories, modes of research and development, and the measurement and methodological technologies needed to understand and measure the impact of the proposed innovations. Emerging research is by its nature uncertain, so high-risk/high-gain proposals and potentially transformative ideas are welcome. Emerging research proposals are limited to one or more of the following areas of inquiry: (a) neural basis of STEM learning; (b) cognitive processes underlying STEM learning and teaching; (c) measurement, modeling, and methods for research and evaluation; and (d) cyberlearning and teaching. *Contextual research proposals* will more typically address problems that are current and widely visible within STEM teaching and learning, with nearer term, more direct implications for use in the context of policy and practice. The contextual research strand offers three broad areas for transformative solutions to persistent problems: (a) research on teaching and learning in formal and informal settings, (b) research on policy and systems, and (c) evaluative research. Estimated number of awards: About 10-15 knowledge diffusion awards, 15-20 empirical awards, and 5-10 large empirical awards. Maximum awards: knowledge diffusion projects -- \$250,000 for up to 2 years; empirical research projects -- \$1,000,000 for up to 3 years; large empirical research projects -- \$2,000,000 for up to 5 years.

**Program URL:** <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2008/nsf08585/nsf08585.pdf>

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**Title: Grants for Statewide, Longitudinal Data Systems Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**

**Sponsor:** U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

**Deadline:** **November 19, 2009**

**CFDA No.:** 84.384

**Program Description:** The purpose of grants under this program is fund the design, development, and implementation of statewide longitudinal data systems to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, and use individual student data. Only state educational agencies (SEAs) are eligible to apply, but an SEA may propose to work jointly with other agencies in the state, such as a higher education agency. The long-term goal of the program is to enable all states to create comprehensive P-20 systems that permit the generation and use of accurate and timely data, support analysis and informed decision making at all levels of the education system, increase the efficiency with which data may be analyzed to support the continuous improvement of education services and outcomes, facilitate research

to improve student academic achievement and close achievement gaps, support education accountability systems, and simplify the processes used by SEAs to make education data transparent through federal and public reporting. The grants awarded will (a) support the development and implementation of systems that have the capacity to link individual student data across time and across databases, including the matching of teachers to students; (b) promote the linking of data collected or held by various institutions, agencies, and states; and (c) protect student privacy. A total of \$245 million is available in one-time funding. IES estimates that individual grants will range from \$2 million to \$20 million for the entire grant period. Grants will be awarded for periods not to exceed 3 years.

**Program URL:** [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/2009\\_ARRA\\_RFA.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/2009_ARRA_RFA.pdf)

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**Title: Education Grants**

**Sponsor:** Joyce Foundation

**Deadline: December 8, 2009**

**Program Description:** The Joyce Foundation supports efforts to close the achievement gaps that separate low-income and minority children from their peers by improving the quality of teachers they encounter in school, expanding their access to educational opportunities in early childhood, and exploring such innovations as small schools and charter schools. Priorities of the Joyce Foundation Education Program are:

1. *Teacher quality.* The foundation supports efforts to improve federal, state, and district policies so that high-need schools in Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee can attract and retain first-rate teachers.
2. *Early childhood education.* The foundation supports policy initiatives aimed at making preschool accessible to all 3- to 5-year-olds in Illinois and Wisconsin through a mixed delivery system that includes schools and community-based settings.
3. *Innovation grants.* A small portion of program funds is reserved for other outstanding opportunities to close the achievement gap, especially policy-oriented efforts to expand the supply of high-quality charter schools and small schools in Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee.

Prospective applicants should submit a two- to three-page letter of inquiry to the appropriate program officer 6-8 weeks before the proposal deadline. The letter should describe the goals of the project, its relationship to the foundation's interests, the target audience and beneficiaries, the estimated budget and duration, and plans for evaluation and dissemination of findings. If the project fits within the foundation's guidelines, the program officer may invite the applicant to submit a full proposal.

**Program URL:** <http://www.joycefdn.org/GrantList/HowToApply.aspx>

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**Title: Course, Curriculum, and Laboratory Improvement (CCLI) -- Transforming Undergraduate Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (NSF 09-529)**

**Sponsor:** National Science Foundation

**Deadline: January 13, 2010 (Type 2 and 3 proposals; Central Resource Project proposals)**

**CFDA No.:** 47.076

**Program Description:** The Course, Curriculum, and Laboratory Improvement (CCLI) program seeks to improve the quality of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education for all undergraduate students. All proposals must contribute to the development of exemplary undergraduate STEM education. Typically projects include one or more of the following components: (a) creating learning materials and strategies; (b) implementing new instructional strategies; (c) developing faculty expertise; (d) assessing and evaluating student achievement; and (e) conducting research on undergraduate STEM education. CCLI accepts proposals for awards at three levels of support, designated Type 1, Type 2, and Type 3. This round of competition invites proposals for Type 2 and 3 projects. Type 2 projects, which typically address more than one program component, are for 2-4 years and may request a total budget of up to \$600,000. Type 3 projects, which support large-scale efforts, are for 5 years and may request a total budget of up to \$5,000,000. Central Resource Project proposals for small focused workshops may be submitted at any time after consulting with a program officer; budgets depend on the scope and scale of the activity.

**Program URL:** <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2009/nsf09529/nsf09529.pdf>

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**Title: IES Unsolicited Grant Opportunities**

**Sponsor:** U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences

**Deadline: March 2, 2010**

*Note.* A prospectus may be submitted at any time during the fiscal year. However, to be assured consideration for funding in FY 2010 (ending September 30, 2010), the prospectus must be received by March 2, 2010.

**Program Description:** The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) will consider unsolicited applications for field-initiated research, evaluation, statistics, and knowledge utilization projects that would make significant contributions to the IES mission. Unsolicited applications are defined as those that are not eligible for funding under current IES grant competitions (see <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>). Activities supported by IES must be relevant to U.S. schools. Those interested in this opportunity should submit a short prospectus that will allow IES to decide whether further conversations with the potential applicant are warranted. Typical awards will be in the range of \$25,000 to \$200,000 (total cost) per year for 1-3 years. Larger budgets and longer award periods will be considered if a compelling case can be made for such support.

**Program URL:** <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/pdf/unsolicited10.pdf>

:::::::::: **Deadlines of Interest to Graduate Students and Postdocs** ::::::::::

**Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship Program**

**Deadline: October 21, 2009**

**Fellowship Amount:** \$25,000. **Duration:** 1-2 years.

**Program URL:** <http://www.spencer.org/content.cfm/dissertation-fellowship-program#dfap>

**National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship**

**Deadline: November 6, 2009**

**Fellowship Amount:** \$55,000 for 1 academic year of research, or \$27,500 for each of 2 contiguous years, working half-time

**Program URL:** [http://www.naeducation.org/NAEd\\_Spencer\\_Postdoctoral\\_Fellowship.html](http://www.naeducation.org/NAEd_Spencer_Postdoctoral_Fellowship.html)

**Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship**

**Deadline:** November 9, 2009

**Fellowship Amount:** \$21,000. **Duration:** 1 year

**Program URL:** [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA\\_047959](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_047959)

**Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship**

**Deadline:** November 9, 2009

**Fellowship Amount:** \$40,000. **Duration:** 1 year

**Program URL:** [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA\\_047960](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_047960)

:::::::::: SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE ::::::::::

WCER-GNS is a grant notification service available exclusively to University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty, researchers, and staff.

- To subscribe, send a message to [wcergrants@mailplus.wisc.edu](mailto:wcergrants@mailplus.wisc.edu) with the words SUBSCRIBE WCER-GNS in the subject line.
- To unsubscribe, send a message to [wcergrants@mailplus.wisc.edu](mailto:wcergrants@mailplus.wisc.edu) with the words UNSUBSCRIBE WCER-GNS in the subject line.

## GRANT MONITORING RESOURCES

### WCER RESOURCES

- **WCER Grant Notification Service**  
WCER routinely monitors current grant opportunities in the education sciences, using resources such as those listed below. The WCER Grant Notification Service (WCER-GNS) is an electronic mailing list available exclusively to University of Wisconsin–Madison faculty, researchers, and staff. Each WCER-GNS email notice lists promising education-related grant opportunities that have come to our attention since the last notice, with links to additional information on the web, if available (see sample notice in handouts). To subscribe, see [www.wcer.wisc.edu/grantServices/GNS/index.php](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/grantServices/GNS/index.php).

### UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON (UW) RESOURCES

- **UW Grants Information Collection**  
The Grants Information Collection is located in Memorial Library (Room 262; 608-262-6431). It has a wealth of resources for grant seeking. The collection librarian is Nikki Busch. The center doesn't conduct searches for patrons but offers training in the use of its resources, including a session on finding graduate support ([grants.library.wisc.edu/seminars.html](http://grants.library.wisc.edu/seminars.html)). The center website ([grants.library.wisc.edu/](http://grants.library.wisc.edu/); see brochure) posts lots of helpful information, including links to available databases ([grants.library.wisc.edu/databases.html](http://grants.library.wisc.edu/databases.html)).

### FUNDING AGENCY RESOURCES

- **National Science Foundation (NSF)**  
The NSF email update service is a very timely, reliable guide to current NSF competitions. You can subscribe on the NSF Web site ([www.nsf.gov](http://www.nsf.gov)). Once you subscribe, you can specify your areas of interest and your email delivery preferences. Emails include links to the online location of each document. NSF funding opportunity notices are also available as RSS feeds. Finally, if you want to survey all active NSF funding opportunities in the area of education, NSF has a site dedicated to that purpose ([www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_list.jsp?org=EHR](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_list.jsp?org=EHR)).
- **U.S. Department of Education (ED)**  
The Department of Education also has an email alert service (EDInfo); you can subscribe at [www.ed.gov/news/newsletters/edinfo/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/news/newsletters/edinfo/index.html). I've found, however, that the Department of Education is slow getting messages out. If you want to know about competitions as soon as they're open, it's best to visit the ED Discretionary Grant Application Packages page ([www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html)) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) funding opportunities page ([ies.ed.gov/funding/](http://ies.ed.gov/funding/); you can subscribe to the IES Newsflash on the IES website at [ies.ed.gov/newsflash/](http://ies.ed.gov/newsflash/)). In addition, you may want to visit the ED *Federal Register* site ([www.ed.gov/news/fedregister/announce/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister/announce/index.html)) for announcements of ED competitions. You can also check out the ED Forecast of Funding Opportunities at [www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html).
- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**  
You can subscribe to the NIH weekly email alert at [grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/listserv.htm](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/listserv.htm). This service is reliable, but education-relevant opportunities are rare. You can access the same information on current funding opportunities on the NIH Web site at

## GRANT MONITORING RESOURCES

[grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/index.html) (look for “Weekly Issue of the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts,” then click on “New Announcements This Week”). NIH funding opportunities are also now available in RSS format ([grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rss\\_info.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rss_info.htm)).

### GRANT DATABASES

- **SPIN: Sponsored Programs Information Network**  
The SPIN database ([spin2000.infoed.org/new\\_spin/spinmain.asp](http://spin2000.infoed.org/new_spin/spinmain.asp)) is a product of InfoEd International. If your institution subscribes to the database, you can search for grant opportunities on the SPIN site; you can receive customized email alerts if your institution subscribes to the SPIN email notification service (called SMARTS). Unfortunately, UW has canceled its subscription to the email service. As a result, I do periodic manual searches.
- **Community of Science**  
The Community of Science (COS; [www.cos.com/](http://www.cos.com/)) is another subscription-based database service. COS gives you results based either on a specific search or on a profile you create that generates periodic hits. I subscribe to the email COS Funding Alert ([fundingalert.cos.com/about/fundingalert.shtml](http://fundingalert.cos.com/about/fundingalert.shtml)), but in my experience, the listings are often either redundant (i.e., already seen via the NSF, ED, or NIH alerts) or not relevant.
- **IRIS (Illinois Researcher Information Service)**  
IRIS ([www.library.illinois.edu/iris/](http://www.library.illinois.edu/iris/)) offers yet another subscription-based database service. To use the email alert service (see [iris.library.uiuc.edu/~iris/alert/](http://iris.library.uiuc.edu/~iris/alert/)), you create a profile of your interests. The service casts a wide net. However, like the COS Funding Alert, the IRIS listings are often either redundant or not relevant.
- **Grants.gov**  
Grants.gov is the federal government’s single access point for federal grants, with a mission to provide a common website to simplify competitive discretionary grants management and eliminate redundancies. Grants.gov enables the grant community to search for grant opportunities and electronically submit applications for more than \$500 billion of grant awards distributed annually by 26 federal grant-making agencies. Searches are easy to run on the Grants.gov Web site ([www.grants.gov/search/advanced.do](http://www.grants.gov/search/advanced.do)).
- **Foundation Center RFP Bulletin**  
This weekly email service is free. You can subscribe at [foundationcenter.org/newsletters/](http://foundationcenter.org/newsletters/). The service seems like a great idea if you want to monitor foundation grant opportunities. My experience, however, is that relevant listings are rare, and when they come up, they’re often opportunities of which one is already aware (e.g., from the Spencer Foundation). If your institution subscribes, you can also search Foundation Grants to Individuals Online.

**SPIN Sample Database Search**  
**Search Terms: Education; Dissertation**  
**10/28/09**  
[http://spin2000.infoed.org/new\\_spin/spinmain.asp](http://spin2000.infoed.org/new_spin/spinmain.asp)

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Program Number: 95964  
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Sponsor: International Research Foundation for English Language Education  
Title: Doctoral Dissertation Grants  
Contact:  
Tel:  
Email: [u0067397@utah.edu](mailto:u0067397@utah.edu)  
Full Program: <http://www.tirfonline.org/2009ddgcall.html>  
Deadlines: 5/1/2009

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor provides funding that is intended to support worthy applicants who have advanced to candidacy in their doctoral programs and whose dissertation research plans address topics that TIRF has prioritized. For Doctoral Dissertation Research Grants, US \$5,000 is the maximum award.

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Program Number: 95230  
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Sponsor: Association for Institutional Research  
Title: Fellowship Program in Institutional Research  
Contact: Sharon Lynn  
Tel: 850-385-4155  
Email: [air@airweb.org](mailto:air@airweb.org)  
Website: <http://www.airweb.org/?page=1837>  
Full Program: <http://www.airweb.org/images/IR%20Fellowship%202009.pdf>  
Deadlines: 4/20/2009

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor offers a graduate fellowship program for graduate study advancing or leading to careers in institutional research, thereby increasing the national level of expertise of institutional research officers and the data that they produce.

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Program Number: 65454  
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Sponsor: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation/ACF/DHHS  
Title: Head Start Graduate Student Research Grants  
Contact: David Kadan  
Tel: 866-429-0520  
Email: [OPREreviews@esi-dc.com](mailto:OPREreviews@esi-dc.com)  
Website: <http://www07.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppId=46068&flag2006=false&mode=VIEW>  
Full Program: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2009-ACF-OPRE-YR-0004.html>  
Deadlines: 4/30/2009,6/1/2009

Deadline Note:

Letters of Intent are optional and are due on April 30, 2009. Full applications are due by June 1, 2009.

SYNOPSIS: Funds are provided for Head Start Graduate Student Research grants to support dissertation research by advanced graduate students who are working in partnership with Head Start and Early Head Start programs and faculty mentors.

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Program Number: 64557  
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Sponsor: American Educational Research Association  
Title: Dissertation Grants Program  
Contact: Jeanie Murdock  
Tel: 805-964-5264  
Email: [jmurdock@aera.net](mailto:jmurdock@aera.net)  
Full Program: [http://www.aera.net/grantsprogram/res\\_training/diss\\_grants/DGFly.html](http://www.aera.net/grantsprogram/res_training/diss_grants/DGFly.html)  
Deadlines: 9/1/2009,1/6/2010

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor provides support for dissertations to: stimulate research on U.S. education policy and practice related issues, with a priority for those involving mathematics and science education using National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and National Science Foundation (NSF) data sets; improve the U.S. educational research community's firsthand knowledge of the range of data available at the two agencies and how to use them; and increase the number of U.S. educational researchers using the data sets.

## SPIN Database Search

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Program Number: 64531  
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Sponsor: American Educational Research Association  
Title: Minority Dissertation Fellowship in Education Research  
Contact: George Wimberly  
Tel: 202-238-3200  
Email: fellowships@aera.net  
Website: <http://www.aera.net/fellowships/?id=88>  
Full Program: [http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/AERA\\_Minority\\_Application\\_Instructions.pdf](http://www.aera.net/uploadedFiles/AERA_Minority_Application_Instructions.pdf)  
Deadlines: 12/15/2009

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor offers doctoral fellowships to enhance the competitiveness of outstanding minority scholars for academic appointments at major research universities by supporting their research and by providing mentoring and guidance toward completion of their doctoral studies.

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Program Number: 60245  
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Sponsor: Educational Testing Service  
Title: TOEFL Small Grants Program for Doctoral Research in Second or Foreign Language Assessment  
Contact:  
Tel: 609-683-2057  
Email: [toefl\\_awards@ets.org](mailto:toefl_awards@ets.org)  
Full Program:  
<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=15bdaf5e44df4010VgnVCM1000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=367ed898c84f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>  
Deadlines: 2/1/2010,10/15/2010

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor provides support to promising students working in the area of foreign/second language assessment to facilitate the timely completion of their dissertations.

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Program Number: 59789  
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Sponsor: Association for Institutional Research  
Title: Improving Institutional Research in Postsecondary Education Institutions--Dissertation Grant Program  
Contact:  
Tel: 850-385-4155, x200  
Email: [air@airweb2.org](mailto:air@airweb2.org)  
Website: <http://www.airweb.org/?page=1626>  
Full Program: [http://www.airweb.org/images/AIR\\_Dissertation\\_Grant\\_Proposal\\_Guidelines\\_09.pdf](http://www.airweb.org/images/AIR_Dissertation_Grant_Proposal_Guidelines_09.pdf)  
Deadlines: 1/16/2009

SYNOPSIS: Funds of up to \$20,000 are provided to doctoral students beginning their dissertation work to conduct research on postsecondary education using the IES-NCES and NSF national databases. Grant support is available for one year to assist the student in the acquisition, analysis, and reporting of data from the National Center for Education Statistics and the National Science Foundation data sets.

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Program Number: 58471  
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Sponsor: National Research Council  
Title: Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships--Dissertation Fellowship  
Contact:  
Tel: 202-334-2872  
Email: [infofell@nas.edu](mailto:infofell@nas.edu)  
Full Program: [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA\\_047959](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_047959)  
Deadlines: 11/9/2009

Deadline Note: In order to be reviewed, the on-line application must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 9, 2009. Supplementary Materials must be received in the Fellowships Office by January 7, 2010.

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor provides support for dissertation completion fellowships to members of six minority groups whose underrepresentation in the professoriate has been severe and long-standing. Eligibility to apply in the dissertation fellowship competition is limited to citizens or nationals of the United States. Awards provide a stipend of \$21,000, and expenses paid to attend conferences. The tenure will be no less than nine months and no more than twelve months.

## SPIN Database Search

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Program Number: 20821  
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Sponsor: International Reading Association

Title: Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award

Contact:

Tel: 302-731-1600

Email: [research@reading.org](mailto:research@reading.org)

Website: [http://www.reading.org/Resources/AwardsandGrants/research\\_outstanding.aspx](http://www.reading.org/Resources/AwardsandGrants/research_outstanding.aspx)

Full Program: <http://www.reading.org/Resources/AwardsandGrants.aspx>

Deadlines: 10/1/2009

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor offers a \$1,000 award for individuals who have completed dissertations in any aspect of the field of reading or literacy between May 15, 2008 and May 14, 2009.

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Program Number: 20817  
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Sponsor: International Reading Association

Title: Helen M. Robinson Grant

Contact:

Tel: 302-731-1600

Email: [research@reading.org](mailto:research@reading.org)

Website: [http://www.reading.org/Resources/AwardsandGrants/research\\_robinson.aspx](http://www.reading.org/Resources/AwardsandGrants/research_robinson.aspx)

Full Program: [http://www.reading.org/Libraries/Awards/HMR\\_Guidelines\\_2010.sflb.ashx](http://www.reading.org/Libraries/Awards/HMR_Guidelines_2010.sflb.ashx)

Deadlines: 1/15/2010

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor supports doctoral students at the early stages of their dissertation research in the area of reading and literacy.

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Program Number: 20052  
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Sponsor: Social Science Research Council

Title: International Dissertation Field Research Fellowship Program (IDRF)

Contact:

Tel: 212-377-2700

Email: [idrf@ssrc.org](mailto:idrf@ssrc.org)

Website: <http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/idrf-fellowship/>

Full Program: <http://programs.ssrc.org/idrf/>

Deadlines: 11/3/2009

SYNOPSIS: This program offers nine to twelve months of support to graduate students in the humanities and social sciences who are enrolled in doctoral programs in the United States and conducting dissertation research outside of the United States.

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Program Number: 10531  
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Sponsor: Educational Testing Service

Title: Jacqueline A. Ross Dissertation Award

Contact:

Tel:

Email: [TOEFL\\_awards@ets.org](mailto:TOEFL_awards@ets.org)

Website: <http://www.ets.org>

Full Program:

<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.c988ba0e5dd572bada20bc47c3921509/?vgnextoid=1d9daf5e44df4010VgnVCM1000022f95190RCRD&vgnnextchannel=367ed898c84f4010VgnVCM1000022f95190RCRD>

Deadlines: 9/1/2009

Deadline Note: September 1, 2009 is the deadline for receipt of summary and abstract, letter from advisor, and official proof of dissertation acceptance. November 1, 2009 is the call for submission of dissertations of finalists.

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor recognizes doctoral dissertation research that makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge about second or foreign language tests and testing and/or the use and development of such tests and testing.

## SPIN Database Search

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Program Number: 09400  
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Sponsor: Spencer Foundation

Title: Dissertation Fellowships for Research Related to Education

Contact:

Tel: 312-274-6526

Email: [fellows@spencer.org](mailto:fellows@spencer.org)

Full Program: <http://www.spencer.org/content.cfm/dissertation-fellowship-program#dfap>

Deadlines: 10/21/2009

SYNOPSIS: Fellowships are awarded to encourage a new generation of scholars from a wide range of disciplines and professional fields to undertake research relevant to the improvement of education. Eligible applicants must be candidates for the doctoral degree at a graduate school in the U.S.

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Program Number: 02219  
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Sponsor: National Academy of Education

Title: National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowships

Contact:

Tel: 202-334-2341

Email: [info@naeducation.org](mailto:info@naeducation.org)

Website: <http://www.naeducation.org>

Full Program: [http://www.naeducation.org/NAEd\\_Spencer\\_Postdoctoral\\_Fellowship.html](http://www.naeducation.org/NAEd_Spencer_Postdoctoral_Fellowship.html)

Deadlines: 11/6/2009

SYNOPSIS: The Postdoctoral Fellowship supports early career scholars working in critical areas of education research.

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Program Number: 01145  
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Sponsor: National Research Council

Title: Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships--Postdoctoral Fellowships

Contact:

Tel: 202-334-2872

Email: [infofell@nas.edu](mailto:infofell@nas.edu)

Full Program: [http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA\\_047960](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/PGA_047960)

Deadlines: 11/9/2009

Deadline Note: In order to be reviewed, the on-line application must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 9, 2009. Supplementary Materials must be received in the Fellowships Office by January 7, 2010.

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor provides support for outstanding researchers and scholars who are members of minority groups whose underrepresentation in the professoriate and in formal programs of postdoctoral study and research in the United States has been long-standing. Fellowships will be offered only to individuals who are citizens or nationals of the United States. Fellowships may be held for either nine or twelve months and may not be deferred or delayed. A \$40,000 stipend is provided.

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Program Number: 00698  
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Sponsor: American Psychological Foundation

Title: Esther Katz Rosen Fellowship

Contact: Emily Leary, Program Officer

Tel: 202-336-5843

Email: [eleary@apa.org](mailto:eleary@apa.org)

Website: <http://www.apa.org/apf/rosengrant.html>

Full Program: <http://www.apa.org/apf/Rosenrfp.pdf>

Deadlines: 3/1/2010

SYNOPSIS: The sponsor provides a fellowship to support graduate students who have achieved doctoral candidacy for activities related to the psychological understanding of gifted and talented children and adolescents.

<http://grants.library.wisc.edu/>

### Contact Information

Memorial Library, Room 262D/E  
728 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706  
Phone: (608) 262-6431

### Memorial Library Regular Semester Hours

Monday–Thursday: 8 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.  
Friday–Saturday: 8 a.m. – 9:45 p.m.  
Sunday: 10 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.

Exceptions: <http://memorial.library.wisc.edu/about/hours.html>

#### Vision

The Grants Information Collection improves the lives of the citizens of Wisconsin – within and beyond the university classroom – by promoting research, advancing learning, and encouraging nonprofit efforts through instruction and access to information relating to grants, philanthropy, and charitable giving.

#### Mission

To promote the understanding of grantsmanship, both within the University of Wisconsin–Madison community and throughout Wisconsin, by providing access to information essential to successful educational, research, and nonprofit grant-seeking, and by collecting literature in the areas of philanthropy, fundraising, and nonprofit management.

December 2007

# GRANTS INFORMATION COLLECTION



<http://grants.library.wisc.edu/>



THE UNIVERSITY  
WISCONSIN  
MADISON

# LIBRARIES

**T**he University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Grants Information Collection (GIC), located at Memorial Library, provides a wide array of information—in both print and electronic format—on scholarships, fellowships, grants, and other funding opportunities for both individuals and nonprofit organizations from private foundations, corporate funders, and federal agencies.

The GIC is a cooperating collection of the Foundation Center, the “nation’s leading authority on philanthropy,” and is available to the public. This relationship provides a veritable wealth of information for our collection’s users.

## What We Do

The GIC is a library collection. Users do their own research, although librarians at the Reference Desk are available to offer initial direction and assistance. The GIC provides books, periodicals, and an extensive Web site for users to browse on fundraising, proposal writing, and philanthropy. Seminars and workshops are regularly given by the grants librarian—topics include “Foundation Grants for Nonprofit Organizations,” “Grants for Your Education,” and more.

The workshops are free of charge, highly attended, and provide exactly the guidance needed to find funding sources. In addition, free personal consultations with the grants librarian may be arranged depending on availability. Before requesting an appointment, it is required that:

- one makes full use of the online information available at <http://grants.library.wisc.edu/faqs.html>;
- persons affiliated with nonprofit organizations come with a specific project or type of program in mind;
- individuals, including academic clientele, have a specific educational or research funding need.

## Databases/Services

The GIC provides access to numerous subscription databases where users can search for scholarships, fellowships, and grants—examples include:

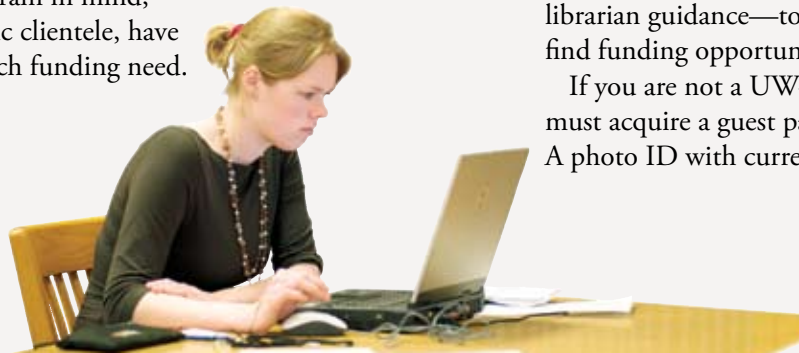
- Community of Science
- Foundation Directory Online
- Foundation Grants to Individuals Online
- Foundations in Wisconsin: A Directory
- GrantSelect
- IRIS: Illinois Researcher Information Service
- RSP Funding for Graduate Students
- RSP Funding for Postdoctorates and Professionals
- RSP Funding for Undergraduates
- SPIN: Sponsored Programs Information Network
- Plus a full range of newspaper, periodical, and reference databases for advanced grantmaker research

The GIC provides numerous services, including: collection orientation/tours, customized course-specific instruction, free regularly scheduled workshops (open to the public), and a robust collection of online subject guides and research tip sheets.

## Benefits

The GIC provides many outstanding benefits to its users. The collection gives access to information that cannot be found anywhere else in Wisconsin, being the only public location in the state that provides as many comprehensive databases. In addition to the quality of information, the overall purpose of the GIC is to give its users the basic skills required—through workshops and librarian guidance—to sift and winnow through the materials to find funding opportunities that match their needs.

If you are not a UW–Madison student, staff or faculty you must acquire a guest pass at the front desk of Memorial Library. A photo ID with current address is required.



## Guides to Proposal Writing: Selected Websites

- UW Grants Information Collection, “Grant Proposal Writing”
  - Websites: <http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=16143&sid=108666>
  - Books: [researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=16143&sid=108601](http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=16143&sid=108601)
- U.S. Department of Education, “Grantmaking at ED”:  
[www.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/grantmaking/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/grantmaking/index.html)
- Institute of Education Sciences Research Funding Opportunities Webinars:  
[ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/previous\\_webinars.asp](http://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/previous_webinars.asp)
- National Science Foundation, “A Guide for Proposal Writing”:  
[www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016.pdf)
- National Institutes of Health:
  - Grant Application Basics: [grants1.nih.gov/grants/grant\\_basics.htm](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/grant_basics.htm)
  - Grants Process Overview: [grants1.nih.gov/grants/grants\\_process.htm](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/grants_process.htm)
  - Planning Your Application: [grants1.nih.gov/grants/planning\\_application.htm](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/planning_application.htm)
  - Writing Your Application: [grants1.nih.gov/grants/writing\\_application.htm](http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm)
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA), “Writing Grants”:  
[www.cfda.gov/?static=grants&s=generalinfo&mode=list&tab=list&tabmode=list](http://www.cfda.gov/?static=grants&s=generalinfo&mode=list&tab=list&tabmode=list)
- Social Science Research Council, “The Art of Writing Proposals” (by Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon): [www.ssrc.org/workspace/images/crm/new\\_publication\\_3/%7B7a9cb4f4-815f-de11-bd80-001cc477ec70%7D.pdf](http://www.ssrc.org/workspace/images/crm/new_publication_3/%7B7a9cb4f4-815f-de11-bd80-001cc477ec70%7D.pdf)



# The Art of Writing Proposals

By Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon

Writing proposals for research funding is a peculiar facet of North American academic culture, and as with all things cultural, its attributes rise only partly into public consciousness. A proposal's overt function is to persuade a committee of scholars that the project shines with the three kinds of merit all disciplines value, namely, conceptual innovation, methodological rigor, and rich, substantive content. But to make these points stick, a proposal writer needs a feel for the unspoken customs, norms, and needs that govern the selection process itself. These are not really as arcane or ritualistic as one might suspect. For the most part, these customs arise from the committee's efforts to deal in good faith with its own problems: incomprehension among disciplines, work overload, and the problem of equitably judging proposals that reflect unlike social and academic circumstances.

Writing for committee competition is an art quite different from research work itself. After long deliberation, a committee usually has to choose among proposals that all possess the three virtues mentioned above. Other things being equal, the proposal that is awarded funding is the one that gets its merits across more forcefully because it addresses these unspoken needs and norms as well as the overt rules. The purpose of these pages is to give competitors for Council fellowships and funding a more even start by making explicit some of those normally unspoken customs and needs.

## Capture the Reviewer's Attention?

While the form and the organization of a proposal are matters of taste, you should choose your form bearing in mind that every proposal reader constantly scans for clear answers to three questions:

- What are we going to learn as the result of the proposed project that we do not know now?
- Why is it worth knowing?
- How will we know that the conclusions are valid?

Working through a tall stack of proposals on voluntarily-donated time, a committee member rarely has time to comb proposals for hidden answers. So, say what you have to say immediately, crisply, and forcefully. The opening paragraph, or the first page at most, is your chance to grab the reviewer's attention. Use it. This is the moment to overstate, rather than understate, your point or question. You can add the conditions and caveats later.

Questions that are clearly posed are an excellent way to begin a proposal: Are strong party systems conducive to democratic stability? Was the decline of population growth in Brazil the result of government policies? These should not be rhetorical questions; they have effect precisely because the answer is far from obvious. Stating your central point, hypothesis, or interpretation is also a good way to begin: Workers do not organize unions; unions organize workers. The success, and failure, of Corazon Aquino's revolution stems from its middle-class origins. Population growth coupled with loss of arable land poses a threat to North African food security in the next decade.

Obviously some projects are too complex and some conceptualizations too subtle for such telegraphic messages to capture. Sometimes only step-by-step argumentation can define the central problem. But even if you adopt this strategy, do not fail to leave the reviewer with something to remember: some message that will remain after reading many other proposals and discussing them for hours and hours. She's the one who claims that Argentina never had a liberal democratic tradition is how you want to be referred to during the committee's discussion, not Oh yes, she's the one from Chicago.

## Aim for Clarity

Remember that most proposals are reviewed by multidisciplinary committees. A reviewer studying a proposal from another field expects the proposer to meet her halfway. After all, the reader probably accepted the committee appointment because of the excitement of surveying other people's ideas. Her only reward is the chance that proposals will provide a lucidly-guided tour of various disciplines' research frontiers. Don't cheat the reviewer of this by inflicting a tiresome trek through the duller idiosyncrasies of your discipline. Many disciplines have parochial traditions of writing in pretentious jargon. You should avoid jargon as much as you can, and when technical language is really needed, restrict yourself to those new words and technical terms that truly lack equivalents in common language. Also, keep the spotlight on ideas. An archeologist should argue the concepts latent in the ceramic typology more than the typology itself, a historian the tendency latent in the mass of events, and so forth. When additional technical material is needed, or when the argument refers to complex ancillary material, putting it into appendices decongests the main text.

## Establish the Context

Your proposal should tell the committee not only what will be learned as a result of your project, but what will be learned that somebody else does not already know. It is essential that the proposal summarize the current state of knowledge and provide an up-to-date, comprehensive bibliography. Both should be precise and succinct. They need not constitute a review of the literature but a sharply focused view of the specific body or bodies of knowledge to which you will add. Committees often treat bibliographies as a sign of seriousness on the part of the applicant, and some members will put considerable effort into evaluating them. A good bibliography testifies that the author did enough preparatory work to make sure the project will complement and not duplicate other people's efforts. Many proposals fail because the references are incomplete or outdated. Missing even a single reference can be very costly if it shows failure to connect with research directly relevant to one's own. Proposal writers with limited library resources are urged to correspond with

colleagues and libraries elsewhere in the early stages of research planning. Resource guides such as Dissertation Abstracts International and Social Science Periodical Index are highly recommended. For many disciplines, annual reviews (e.g., Annual Review of Anthropology) offer state-of-the-art discussions and rich bibliographies. Some disciplines have bibliographically-oriented journals, for example Review of Economic Literature and Contemporary Sociology. There are also valuable area studies-oriented guides: Handbook of Latin American Studies, International African Bibliography, etc. Familiarizing yourself with them can save days of research. Powerful bibliographic searches can be run on CD-ROM databases such as the Social Science Citations Index, Social Sciences Index, and Modern Language Association International Index. Also, on-line databases such as CARL and ERIC, available by library or network access, greatly increase your bibliographic reach.

### What's the Payoff?

Disciplinary norms and personal tastes in justifying research activities differ greatly. Some scholars are swayed by the statement that it has not been studied (e.g., an historian may argue that no book has been written about a particular event, and therefore one is needed), while other scholars sometimes reflect that there may be a good reason why not. Nevertheless, the fact that less is known about one's own chosen case, period, or country than about similar ones may work in the proposer's favor. Between two identical projects, save that one concerns Egypt and the other the Sudan, reviewers are likely to prefer the latter. Citing the importance of the events that provide the subject matter is another and perhaps less dubious appeal. Turning points, crucial breakthroughs, central personages, fundamental institutions, and similar appeals to the significance of the object of research are sometimes effective if argued rather than merely asserted. Appealing to current importance may also work: e.g., democratic consolidation in South America, the aging population in industrialized countries, the relative decline of the hegemony of the United States. It's crucial to convince readers that such topics are not merely timely, but that their current urgency provides a window into some more abiding problem. Among many

social scientists, explicit theoretical interest counts heavily as a point of merit. Theoretical exposition need not go back to the axiomatic bases of the discipline, proposal readers will have a reasonable interdisciplinary breadth, but it should situate the local problem in terms of its relevance to live, sometimes controversial, theoretical currents. Help your reader understand where the problem intersects the main theoretical debates in your field and show how this inquiry puts established ideas to the test or offers new ones. Good proposals demonstrate awareness of alternative viewpoints and argue the author's position in such a way as to address the field broadly, rather than developing a single sectarian tendency indifferent to alternatives.

### Use a Fresh Approach

Surprises, puzzles, and apparent contradictions can powerfully persuade the reviewer whose disciplinary superego enforces a commitment to systematic model building or formal theorizing: Given its long-standing democratic traditions, Chile was expected to return to democracy before other countries in the Southern Cone, and yet . . . Is it because these traditions were already extinct by 1973 or because the assumption on which this prediction was based is false? Everyone expected that One Big Union--the slogan of the movement--would strike and win wage increases for workers. Yet statistical evidence shows just the contrary: strong unions do not strike but instead restrain workers' wage demands.

It is often worthwhile to help readers understand how the research task grows from the intellectual history or current intellectual life of the country or region that generated it. Council committees strive to build linkages among an immense diversity of national and international intellectual traditions, and members come from various countries and schools of thought. Many committee members are interested in the interplay of diverse traditions. In fact, the chance to see intellectual history in the making is another reason people accept committee membership. It is a motive to which proposals can legitimately appeal.

It pays to remember that topics of current salience, both theoretical and in the so-called real world, are likely to be a crowded field. The competitors will be more numerous and the competition less interesting than in truly unfamiliar terrain. Unless you have something original to say about them, you may be well advised to avoid topics typically styled of central interest to the discipline. Usually these are topics about which everyone is writing, and the reason is that somebody else has already made the decisive and exciting contribution. By the time you write your proposal, obtain funding, do the research, and write it up, you might wish you were working on something else. So if your instinct leads you to a problem far from the course that the pack is running, follow it, not the pack: nothing is more valuable than a really fresh beginning.

## Describe Your Methodology

Methodological canons are largely discipline-specific and vary widely even within some disciplines. But two things can safely be said about methodological appeal. First, the proposal must specify the research operations you will undertake and the way you will interpret the results of these operations in terms of your central problem. Do not just tell what you mean to achieve, tell how you will spend your time while doing it. Second, a methodology is not just a list of research tasks but an argument as to why these tasks add up to the best attack on the problem. An agenda by itself will normally not suffice because the mere listing of tasks to perform does not prove that they add up to the best feasible approach.

Some popularly-used phrases fall short of identifying recognizable research operations. For example, I will look at the relation between  $x$  and  $y$  is not informative. We know what is meant when an ornithologist proposes to look at a bird, but looking at a relation between variables is something one only does indirectly, by operations like digging through dusty archive boxes, interviewing, observing and taking standardized notes, collecting and testing statistical patterns, etc. How will you tease the relationship of underlying forces from the mass of

experience? The process of gathering data and moving from data to interpretation tends to follow disciplinary customs, more standard in some fields than in others; help readers from other fields recognize what parts of your methodology are standard, which are innovative. Be as specific as you possibly can be about the activities you plan to undertake to collect information, about the techniques you will use to analyze it, and about the tests of validity to which you commit yourself. Most proposals fail because they leave reviewers wondering what the applicant will actually do. Tell them! Specify the archives, the sources, the respondents, and the proposed techniques of analysis.

A research design proposing comparison between cases often has special appeal. In a certain sense all research is comparative because it must use, implicitly or explicitly, some point of reference. Making the comparison explicit raises its value as scientific inquiry. In evaluating a comparative proposal, readers ask whether the cases are chosen in such a way that their similarities and differences illuminate the central question. And is the proposer in a position to execute both legs of the comparison? When both answers are positive, the proposal may fare particularly well.

The proposal should prove that the researcher either possesses, or cooperates with people who possess, mastery of all the technical matters the project entails. For example, if a predominantly literary project includes an inquiry into the influence of the Tupian language on rural Brazilian Portuguese, the proposal will be checked for the author's background in linguistics and/or Indian languages, or the author's arrangements to collaborate with appropriate experts.

## Specify Your Objectives

A well-composed proposal, like a sonata, usually ends by alluding to the original theme. How will research procedures and their products finally connect with the central question? How will you know if your idea was wrong or right? In some disciplines this imperative traditionally means holding to the strict canon of the

falsifiable hypothesis. While respecting this canon, committee members are also open to less formal approaches. What matters is to convince readers that something is genuinely at stake in the inquiry, that it is not tendentiously moving toward a preconceived end, and that this leaven of the unknown will yield interesting, orderly propositions.

Proposals should normally describe the final product of the project: an article, book, chapter, dissertation, etc. If you have specific plans, it often helps to spell them out, because specifying the kind of journal in which you hope to publish, or the kind of people you hope to address, will help readers understand what might otherwise look like merely odd features of the proposal. While planning and drafting your proposal, you should keep in mind the program guidelines and application procedures outlined in the brochure specific to the Council program to which you are applying. If you have specific questions about the program, you may wish to consult with a staff member. Your final proposal should include all requested enclosures and appendices.


## Final Note

To write a good proposal takes a long time. Start early. Begin thinking about your topic well in advance and make it a habit to collect references while you work on other tasks. Write a first draft at least three months in advance, revise it, show it to colleagues. Let it gather a little dust, collect colleagues' comments, revise it again. If you have a chance, share it with a seminar or similar group; the debate should help you anticipate what reviewers will eventually think. Revise the text again for substance. Go over the language, style, and form. Resharpen your opening paragraph or first page so that it drives home exactly what you mean as effectively as possible.

Good luck.

# UW-Madison Human Research Protection Program (HRPP)

<http://www.grad.wisc.edu/research/hrpp/index.html>



THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

**The Graduate School**

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Search... Go!

- The Graduate School
- Human Research Protection Program**
- Step by Step Instructions for Protocol Submission
- Clinical Trials Registration
- HRPP Policies
- For Participants and the Public
- Online Training
- IRB Websites
- Ethical Principles, Federal & State Law
- UW-Madison Resources
- Contact Us

## Welcome to the UW-Madison Human Research Protection Program

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) is an integrated institution-wide program coordinated by the Graduate School [Office of Research Policy](#) in concert with the Associate Deans for Research of the College of Letters and Science, School of Education and School of Medicine and Public Health, which house the four campus [Institutional Review Boards \(IRBs\)](#), and in consultation with the Office of Administrative Legal Services.

In addition to the four IRBs, other major components of the UW-Madison HRPP include several centers and committees that provide research review, such as the Comprehensive Cancer Center ([UWCCCC](#)), the Institute for Clinical and Translational Research ([ICTR](#)), the Office of Clinical Trials ([OCT](#)), the Pharmaceutical Research Center ([PRC](#)), the Institutional Biosafety Committee ([IBC](#)), and the Radiation Safety Committee ([RSC](#)). The program also intersects with the UW-Madison Conflict of Interest Committee ([COIC](#)) and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs ([RSP](#)).

### News and Announcements

- [UW-Madison Updates IRB Registration to Meet New FDA and OHRP Requirements](#)
- [Sign up now for 2009-2010 Human Research Protection Program Seminars](#)
- [UW-Madison and VA Hospital Achieve AAHRPP Accreditation \(State Lab of Hygiene, UWHCA and UWMF also Accredited\)](#)
- [New Policy Identifies Who Can Be PI on Human Subjects Protocol](#)

[Email us](#) with Questions...Comments about human research protections at UW-Madison.

The Graduate School | UW Home

Last update: 16 September, 2009  
Feedback, questions or accessibility issues: [gswebmaster@bascom.wisc.edu](mailto:gswebmaster@bascom.wisc.edu)  
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## **Graduate School Seminar Series: Human Research Protections Seminars**

### **Submitting Research Protocols to the SBS and Education IRBs via Webkit**

September 23, 2009, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

**Location:** Education Sciences, Room 259

**Presenters:** Mike Bingham and Lillian Larson

**Description:** In July, all WebKit forms were updated. This session will cover Frequently asked questions, including how to submit a new study, how to submit required changes, and how to find your approved consent forms. The most common WebKit errors will also be covered, as well as how to obtain access to WebKit for new users.

### **Community Based Research from a Biomedical Perspective**

October 7, 2009, 2:00 - 3:30 pm

**Location:** Clinical Sciences Center, G5/119

**Presenter:** Alex Adams, Associate Professor, School of Medicine and Public Health

**Description:** This seminar will describe community based participatory research—a method of conducting research in partnership with communities, including participation in formation of the research question, research design, data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of results. Using local and national examples, research issues such as developing a working research partnership, going from small to larger projects, understanding community vs. academic needs, utilizing community strengths, IRB issues, funding issues, and issues of data ownership and dissemination will be explored.

### **Social & Behavioral Science and Education Mock IRB Session**

October 15, 2009, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

**Location:** Memorial Union, Old Madison Room

**Presenters:** Mike Bingham and Lillian Larson

**Description:** This discussion will focus on the mechanics of an IRB meeting, as conducted by the Social/Behavioral and Education Institutional Review Boards. Included will be the process by which IRB members review protocols, discuss relevant issues, and make their final determinations. Furthermore, IRB staff, will present an overview of relevant Federal Regulations, and will allow attendees to perform their own IRB review.





## **HIPAA and the Common Rule in Human Subjects Research**

December 15, 2009, 2:00 - 3:30 pm

Location: Clinical Sciences Center, G5/119

Presenter: Rebecca Hutton, JD, MS, University Legal Counsel and HIPAA Privacy Officer

Description: This seminar covers the requirements of HIPAA and the Common Rule in human subjects research, focusing on the interaction and differences between these two federal rules. Practical advice on meeting the requirements of both HIPAA and the Common Rule in human subjects research will be presented, along with a review of the basics of both rules (including authorization and informed consent, preparatory to research activities, and the use of limited data sets).

### **Other Human Research Protections seminars coming in spring 2010:**

What do research teams need to report to the HS & MR IRBs; Ethical Issues in Genetic Research; Fundamentals of Randomized Clinical Trials; Ethical and Regulatory Issues in Human Subjects Research; Informed Consent in Social/Behavioral and Education Research; OAR and FCOI; Community Based Research from Social Behavioral and Ed Perspectives; What do research teams need to report to the Social/Behavioral and Education IRBs?; Clinicaltrials.gov; and Obtaining Surrogate Consent in Human Subjects Research.

### **Separate registration for each presentation is required.**

For details and registration information, please visit  
[http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/reg/catalog\\_series.aspx?serieskey=347](http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/reg/catalog_series.aspx?serieskey=347)

Check back frequently throughout the semester for updates to the seminar schedule.

Revised 9/10/09



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## Grant Writing: An Editor's Perspective

### *Common Pitfalls*

- Poor match between the project and agency priorities.
- Failure to follow the guidelines in the request for proposals (RFP).
- Too many cooks: In collaborative proposals, with different parts of the proposal farmed out to different people, failure to make one person responsible for weaving the parts into a coherent, well-written whole.
- Too little time.

### *A Few Tips*

- The first is the most important and unfortunately the most neglected: Plan ahead; leave plenty of time.
- RFP, RFP, RFP. Grant review is a highly competitive process, forcing reviewers to fall back on violations of the RFP as the basis for dismissing or penalizing proposals. Read the RFP very carefully at the start and then reread it as you write the proposal and before you finalize the draft. You'll probably find something new each time.
- Familiarize yourself with funding agency Web sites. Read RFPs for recreation.
- Look for opportunities to read or—even better—contribute to mentors' and colleagues' proposals.
- In framing your project, limit the number of key ideas, make sure they're well developed, and reference them consistently throughout the proposal.
- Don't make the abstract an afterthought—or a verbatim excerpt from the proposal.
- Make the first paragraph count. Grab your reviewers' attention right from the start. In just a couple of sentences, tell them exactly what you propose to do and why it matters. Don't make them struggle to figure out the basics as they go through the proposal.
- Make the review process as easy as possible for your reviewers. Remember that they may not be familiar with your area, and they'll probably be skimming what you've labored over. Make your ideas easy to assimilate quickly by following these guidelines:
  - Conform to reviewers' expectations by strictly adhering to the organizational structure prescribed by the RFP, adopting the suggested headings (or something very close to them), directly addressing the program priorities, and judiciously using program buzzwords. All of these things will reassure the reviewers that your proposal is responsive to the RFP.
  - Use "plain English" to the degree possible. If you use a technical term, evaluate whether you can expect all of your reviewers to be familiar with it. If not, explain the term on the first use and use the *same* term consistently thereafter. Using more than one term to refer to the same concept raises questions in the mind of the reader who's not familiar with the subject matter.
  - Use abbreviations and acronyms sparingly and be sure to give the name in full the first time, introducing the abbreviation in parentheses. Although the funding agencies themselves are very fond of abbreviations, reviewers will likely find it maddening to encounter unfamiliar abbreviations sprinkled throughout a proposal.

- Use numbered and bulleted lists, tables, and figures where appropriate to facilitate quicker assimilation of key points.
- If you use Microsoft Word, apply styles to your headings. Styles will enable you to automatically generate a table of contents, if one is required. They will also let you use the Document Map feature (in the View menu) while you write. The Document Map displays your headings in a separate pane to the left of your document. You can use this feature to quickly navigate through the document; to keep track of your location in it; and most important, to continually evaluate the organization of your proposal.
- When you have a near-final draft, ask colleagues to review it and offer comments. Even better, give it to someone outside your field and ask them to flag anything that is unclear or unconvincing.
- Finally, if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. If possible, get copies of the reviews and use them to improve your proposal. It's not at all uncommon to win a grant on the second or even third try.