

Call for Research Proposals – 2009

The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF)
invites proposals for
Doctoral Dissertation Grants
in the field of English language education.

**PLEASE NOTE NEW PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
MAY 1, 2009**

About TIRF

The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF) was founded in 1999 as the TESOL International Research Foundation (TIRF), an international, non-profit organization. Its aim is to generate new knowledge and to collect and organize existing knowledge about the teaching and learning of English for the purposes of informing educational policy; improving classroom practices; and, ultimately, expanding educational, occupational, and social opportunities for individuals in a global society. TIRF is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of scholars, authors, and corporate sector volunteers and is supported by charitable donations. TIRF is committed to developing and implementing an innovative, proactive applied research program, the ultimate purpose of which is to help ensure that English as a second or foreign language is taught, learned, and tested in a manner that is demonstrably effective, expedient, and economical. TIRF is committed to strengthening links between theory, practice, and policy, and to fostering partnerships among researchers around the world.

Two Categories of Grant Proposals

TIRF funds two kinds of grant proposals. These are Priority Research Grants and Doctoral Dissertation Grants.

TIRF has welcomed Priority Research Grant (**PRG**) proposals from established researchers with appropriate research experience (including publications and presentations) and training (normally a PhD, EdD or the equivalent). For Priority Research Grants, US \$ 25,000 is the maximum award. Applications for smaller amounts are encouraged. **TIRF is not accepting PRG proposals for 2009 at this time.**

TIRF welcomes Doctoral Dissertation Grant (**DDG**) proposals for 2009. The DDG funding is intended to support worthy applicants who have advanced to candidacy in their doctoral programs and whose dissertation research plans to address topics which TIRF has prioritized (see the link to the list of TIRF Research Priorities below). For Doctoral Dissertation Research Grants, US \$ 5,000 is the maximum award.

Notification of Results and Disbursement of Funds

Notification of results for DDG Awards will be made by **October 19, 2009**. The project summaries of successful proposals and photographs of grant recipients will be posted on the TIRF Web site by November 6, 2009. Researchers whose projects have been funded by TIRF must provide brief (one-page) progress reports to the TIRF Board of Trustees at six-month intervals, until the project has been completed, following the reporting requirements for all TIRF grants.

Researcher Accountability

For DDG recipients, progress reports are expected at approximately six-month intervals: by March 1, 2010; August 31, 2010; and March 1, 2011. Funding will be paid out in two equal installments. Once researchers accept a TIRF grant, they will receive half of the award. At that time, they will also indicate what they expect to accomplish by the time their first interim report is submitted. Then, in that first interim report, they must note which of their research “milestones” they have reached. If the milestones have been reached, the second (and final) funding installment will be sent.

At project completion, researchers must submit a narrative final report (2-3 pages, single-spaced, with an appendices and references) summarizing their research findings for a general audience and suggesting implications of the research for practitioners and policy-makers.

Researchers must acknowledge TIRF funding in all forms of dissemination of the research. These forms include making presentations based on the project at international conferences and producing publications in international journals in the area of second language education.

TIRF reserves the right to use information from project proposal summaries and final reports for dissemination on its website and in other media. Copies of dissertations and other publications should be sent to the TIRF business office: PO Box 4574, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA 48106-4514. In addition, all publications resulting from a TIRF grant must acknowledge the support of the Foundation.

TIRF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT (DDG) TOPICS

Doctoral Dissertation Grant (DDG) proposal applicants may choose from any of the following research priorities topics listed on the TIRF website (www.tirfonline.org): 2002 (“age issue”), 2003 (“teachers’ proficiency”), 2004 (“technology”), 2005/2006 (“effective grammar instruction”) 2008-09 (“bilingualism and plurilingualism in business and industry” and “language assessment”).

TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant Features

- Doctoral Dissertation Grants of up to US \$5,000 per proposal are available. Smaller sums may be awarded.

- Allocations of funds are made subject to budgetary availability. However, it is likely that we will fund **up to five** Doctoral Dissertation Grants and in 2009.
- Preference is given to research projects that can be completed in one year.
- Preference is given to projects that have clear implications for policy-makers and others in positions to make decisions involving English language education practices.
- Research involving multiple research methods (e.g., qualitative and quantitative approaches) is encouraged.
- If English proficiency testing is planned (for either students or teachers), we strongly recommend the use of appropriate international, standardized English language tests whose results can be easily interpreted by researchers in other contexts; if other tests are to be used or developed, please include the rationale for the selection or development of these particular instruments.
- Research that involves the synthesis of existing data sets and research findings will also be considered.
- TIRF will fund conference travel only to a total of US \$2,000 per DDG. We strongly encourage grantees to disseminate their findings via electronic media and standard means of academic and professional publication as well. Finally, personal expenses such as the cost of storage, moving, insurance, and rent are not permissible budget items.
- Additional sources of funding applied for or received for the same research project or a larger project should be declared. Seeking or obtaining other sources of funding for the project **does not** prevent you from applying for a TIRF grant; however, it is important that you state the unique contribution a TIRF grant will make to your project.
- In addition to submitting progress reports to TIRF every six months, grantees must submit a two-page narrative final report for the project written for a general audience as well as a final financial report documenting how the funding was used by August 31, 2011. Written evidence of the hiring of any research assistants and consultants must be submitted with the final report, in the form of names, addresses, email addresses, amounts paid, period of employment, and tasks done. This information is important for TIRF fiscal accountability.
- TIRF DDG awards are given to the individual receiving the award. TIRF does not make payments to other parties involved in the research project. The individual receiving the award is accountable to TIRF for the funds awarded.

NOTE: TIRF reserves the right to fund less than the budgeted amount in proposals, based on TIRF's fiscal constraints and feedback from reviewers about the appropriateness of budgets.

Characteristics of Successful TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant Proposals in Previous Years

DDG applications are only accepted from individuals who have advanced to Ph.D. candidacy in accordance with the requirements of their institution (this criterion is absolutely necessary and must be attested by the doctoral supervisor). Benchmarks for candidacy include the following:

The doctoral student

- has written a proposal directly and clearly related to a TIRF Priority Research topic;
- has written a literature review that demonstrates familiarity with other recent research on the topic and related issues as well as gaps in that research;
- has provided a detailed account of research methods;
- has included a supporting letter from a supervisor providing excellent recommendation for the project
- shows scholarly and professional promise, as judged from the short CV.

The most common reasons for not funding DDG proposals are that the students are not yet far enough along in their doctoral studies or the proposals are off topic. Other common weaknesses are that proposals have not been carefully proofread, the guidelines have not been followed carefully, the research is not doable in a year, and the research design and questions are weak. We recommend that students have their research supervisors read their proposals and provide feedback before they are submitted to TIRF.

DDG Application Procedures

- The deadline for receipt of complete proposals is **May 1, 2009** (11:59 p.m., Maintain Daylight Time—Canada/USA).
- All applications **must be submitted electronically** by email using a single Word document as an attachment that includes all parts of the completed application. Please send completed applications to the TIRF Research Advisory Committee at tirf@lists.utah.edu. **Faxed or mailed applications will not be accepted.**
- **TIRF 2009 DDG Application** should appear in the Subject heading of the email. This format will permit us to review applications in a timely way.
- Do not submit your application more than once. If you submit multiple copies of your proposal, only the first one received will be processed.
- Acknowledgement of the receipt of applications will be sent by the TIRF webmaster to the email address from which the application was sent unless otherwise noted on the cover sheet.

- Finally, if you have any difficulties submitting your proposal electronically or if you have not had your application acknowledged within 48 hours of sending it, please contact MaryAnn Christison (mac@linguistics.utah.edu) using the Subject heading “TIRF Inquiry.” Late submissions will not be accepted.

Applications must comply with the required proposal format as described below. Applications that do not follow these specifications or are incomplete will be rejected. Please do not exceed the page lengths indicated for each section of the proposal.

DDG Grant Adjudication

Research proposals will be adjudicated by the TIRF Research Advisory Committee (RAC), composed of at least three currently appointed TIRF trustees. In addition to the RAC’s internal review of proposals, the RAC may elect to send proposals to up to four external reviewers with relevant academic expertise for their assessment. The TIRF Research Advisory Committee retains final authority over all decisions concerning recommendations for funding made to the TIRF Board of Trustees.

We regret that we are unable to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants about the reasons for which they were not funded. Unfortunately, because of the limited funds available, not all applications worthy of funding will be approved for funding; in 2009, we anticipate funding up to five DDG awards, based on the merit of proposals and other fiscal considerations.

TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant 2009 Proposal Format

1. Cover page

- Title of project
- Type of grant application: **Doctoral Dissertation Grant.**
- Topic of TIRF Priority to be researched: 2002 (“age issue”), 2003 (“teachers’ proficiency”), 2004 (“technology”), 2005/2008 (“effective grammar instruction”), 2008-09 (“bilingualism and plurilingualism in business and industry” and “language assessment”). NOTE: DDG applicants may choose any one of these topics.
- Names and affiliation(s) of applicant.
- Email, phone, fax, and mailing address of applicant. It is crucial that all email addresses for applicants are correct; be sure to indicate the email address to which you would like the results of the competition to be sent.
- Doctoral Dissertation Grant proposals must include the name, affiliation, and email address of the research supervisor or advisor.
 - **NOTE:** An email letter (1 page maximum) must be sent by the doctoral student’s supervisor directly to TIRF (tirf@lists.utah.edu) with the Subject heading **Supervisor’s Letter for [your name]** by the application deadline to verify the student’s status in the program. Please do not submit letters from more than one supervisor. To be eligible, students must have completed all doctoral program requirements apart from the dissertation and must have had a research proposal or topic already approved by a supervisory committee or an appropriate faculty board. The letter from the research supervisor should comment on the student’s readiness and ability to undertake the proposed TIRF project. The supervisor should also indicate whether s/he has read the proposal that is being submitted.

2. **Project summary** (200-250 words): NOTE: The summaries of successful proposals will be made public on our Web site as well as through other media. Please prepare your summary with this in mind and please proofread all proposals carefully.

3. **Detailed proposal** (6 pages maximum, single-spaced, 12-point font), using the following section headings:

- Statement of research issue or problem and relationship to TIRF’s current research priority
- Theoretical background; please integrate within this section the research literature that you are drawing upon to situate your study; you must convince us that you are familiar with current, relevant research in the area of the Research Priority topic.
- Research methodology
- Statement of likely implications of research for theory, policy, and/or practice
- Explanation of the role and expertise of any research partners and/or consultants (if applicable);
- If you are proposing research in more than one country, be sure to explain who your research collaborators will be in the other countries and what their qualifications are.
- Timetable (in months). Note: Research should be completed in one year.
- Plans for dissemination; i.e., the scholarly conferences at which you would likely present

the results and journals or other forms of publication that would be appropriate.

- Brief explanation of how principles of research ethics will be upheld. If you are not familiar with guidelines for ethical research, you may wish to consult the Informed Consent Guidelines published at the back of each issue of the *TESOL Quarterly* or in most current research methods textbooks in education.
- Selected up-to-date bibliography (1-2 pages maximum, not included in the 6-page limit)

4. **Detailed budget and brief rationale for all items (2 pages maximum)**

- Itemized expenses (e.g., personnel, transportation, communication, supplies and other expenses, dissemination).
- Please note that **computer hardware is not an allowable budget item**, and a rationale is needed for all budget items. Please be as specific as possible and indicate all costs in US dollars.
- Statement about other research funding applied for or received for the same project or for a larger/related study, and how the TIRF grant will make a unique contribution to the successful completion of the project. (NOTE: Applicants are permitted to seek or obtain additional funds to complete the research project, but should explain the nature and function of the funding from the different sources.)
- For other information about allowed/disallowed budget items or limits, please see the TIRF Grant Features section above.

5. A short, current CV for the applicant (2 pages maximum; the CV should be contained within the master document; please do **not** send separate attachment files for each section of the proposal, including this one.)