



CALL FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT **PROPOSALS – 2012**

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

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
MAY 14, 2012

INTRODUCTION

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 an all-volunteer Board of Trustees composed of scholars, authors, and individuals working in the corporate sector, 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.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a Doctoral Dissertation Grant (DDG), a candidate **must be clearly advanced to doctoral candidacy** (dissertation stage) in accordance with the requirements of his/her institution. In other words, the candidate will have completed any coursework and/or examinations deemed necessary by his/her university, and will have had his/her research plan approved by a faculty committee. **This criterion is absolutely necessary and must be confirmed by the doctoral candidate's research supervisor.**



Description

One of the activities TIRF undertakes to advance its mission is the funding of doctoral research. In 2012, TIRF will consider DDG proposals. The DDG funding is intended to support worthy applicants who have advanced to candidacy (the dissertation phase in their doctoral programs) and whose dissertation research plans address topics that TIRF has prioritized (see below). Proposals are due by **May 14, 2012**.

TIRF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT (DDG)

Research Priorities

For DDG proposals, applicants may choose from any of the research priorities topics listed below.

- Bilingualism/Plurilingualism in Business, Industry, and the Professions
- Language Assessment
- Optimal Uses of Technology in the Delivery of English Language Instruction
- Language Teacher Education
- Students' Age and Effective English Language Education in Schools

Proposals for TIRF DDGs should closely and explicitly address one of these research priorities. An explanation of TIRF's research priorities can be found by [clicking here](#) and scrolling down. Click on any of the research priorities to learn more.

Features of the TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant

- DDGs are awarded for up to US \$5,000 per proposal. Smaller sums are awarded and are dependent on the budget for the proposal.
- Allocations of funds are made subject to budgetary availability. However, TIRF may fund up to five DDGs for the 2012 competition.
- TIRF will allow a maximum of \$2,000 for conference travel in the budget for a DDG. Additional travel funds may be allocated in the budget for data collection or essential researcher meetings. Personal expenses, such as the cost of storage, moving, insurance, salary, and rent, are not permissible budget items. In no case will DDG awards exceed \$5,000.
- 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 disqualify a TIRF DDG applicant; however, it is important that an



applicant states the unique contribution a TIRF grant will make to his/her research project.

- If English proficiency testing is planned (for either students or teachers), TIRF strongly recommends the use of appropriate international, standardized English language tests so that the results can be easily interpreted by researchers in other contexts. If other tests are to be used or developed, applicants should explain the rationale for the selection or development of these particular instruments.
- TIRF strongly encourages grantees to disseminate their findings via electronic media and standard means of academic and professional presentations and publications as well. **TIRF must be acknowledged in all forms of dissemination.**
- In addition to submitting progress reports to TIRF every six months, grantees must submit a two- to five-page narrative final report for the project by August 31, 2014. The final report should be written for a general audience. TIRF also requires a final financial report by August 31, 2014, documenting how the funding was used. Final reports should be sent to info@tirfonline.org.

NOTE: TIRF reserves the right to fund less than the requested amount in DDG proposals. The amount awarded is based on TIRF's availability of funding and feedback from reviewers about the appropriateness of applicants' budgets.

TIRF DDGs FUNDED IN PREVIOUS YEARS

Characteristics of Successful Proposals

In the past, the strongest DDG proposals have been submitted by applicants who

- have written proposals directly and clearly related to one of the priority research topics identified by TIRF;
- have written literature reviews that 1) demonstrate familiarity with other recent research on the topic and related issues, and 2) identify a gap in the research that motivates the proposed doctoral research;
- have provided detailed accounts of the data collection and data analysis methods to be used;
- show scholarly and professional promise, as judged from the applicants' CVs;
- have research projects that can be completed in one year;



- have projects that have clear implications for policymakers and others in positions to make decisions involving English language education practices; and
- have proposals in which the research methods (both data collection and data analysis) are clearly articulated and are definitely appropriate for addressing the research questions; where suitable, multi-methods research would be desirable.

Common Reasons Proposals Are Not Funded

The most common reasons for not funding a DDG proposal are the following:

- The applicant is not a doctoral student.
- The applicant is not yet far enough along in his/ her doctoral studies.
- The proposal does not fit with any of TIRF's research priorities.
- The proposal has not been carefully proofread.
- TIRF's proposal guidelines have not been followed carefully.
- The proposal is poorly written.

It is strongly recommended that applicants have their research supervisors read their proposals before submitting them to TIRF.

DDG Application Procedures

- The deadline for receipt of complete proposals is **May 14, 2012** (11:59 p.m., Pacific Daylight Time—Canada/USA).
- All applications must be submitted electronically via TIRF's website using a single Word document that includes all parts of the completed application. An applicant can upload his or her document to TIRF's website by [clicking here](#). Faxed or mailed applications will not be accepted.
- Applications may not be submitted more than once. If multiple copies of an applicant's proposal are submitted, only the first one received will be processed.
- Acknowledgement of the receipt of applications will be sent to the email address from which the application was sent unless otherwise noted on the cover sheet.
- Finally, if an applicant has any difficulties submitting his/her proposal electronically, please send an email to info@tirfonline.org using the subject heading "2012 DDG Application – Technical Difficulty."
- If an applicant has not had his/her application acknowledged within three business days of sending it, please contact info@tirfonline.org using the subject heading "DDG Application Received?"



- Late submissions will not be accepted.

Applications must comply with the required proposal format located at the end of this document. Applications that do not follow these specifications or are incomplete will be rejected. Applicants may 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) and other scholars in the field who have agreed to be external reviewers. Each proposal is reviewed by at least two reviewers. If the two reviewers are not in agreement as to the merits of the proposal, the proposal is sent to a third reviewer. No reviewers adjudicate proposals for their own doctoral students. The TIRF Research Advisory Committee retains final authority over all decisions concerning recommendations for funding made to the TIRF Board of Trustees.

The Foundation is unable to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants about the reasons for which they were not funded. Unfortunately, because of the limited grant money available, not all applications worthy of support will be approved for funding.

Notification of Results and Disbursement of Funds

Notification of results for DDG awards will be made by **August 31, 2012**. The project summaries of successful proposals and photographs of grant recipients will be posted on TIRF's website by October 31, 2012.

For DDG award recipients, progress reports are expected at approximately six-month intervals: by February 1, 2013; August 1, 2013; and February 1, 2014.

Funding will be paid out in three installments.

1. Once awardees accept a TIRF grant, they will receive the first installment, which is 40% of the award. At that time, they will also indicate what they expect to accomplish by the time the first interim report is submitted (i.e., the milestones).
2. In the first interim report, awardees must note which of their research "milestones" they have reached. At that point, the second funding installment will be sent. This installment will consist of 40% of the award.
3. When the research project is completed and the two- to five-page final report has been submitted and accepted by the RAC, the third and final payment (20% of the grant) will be sent to the awardee. The two- to five-page final report should summarize the research findings for a general audience and include a clear statement about the implications for practitioners and policy-makers. A complete and accurate reference list from the grant recipient's dissertation must also be included and must strictly follow the most current



APA formatting guidelines even if APA format was not used in the original research project. In addition, TIRF also requires a final financial report documenting how the funding was used. Final reports for DDG awards for the 2012 competition are due by August 31, 2014. Final reports should be sent to info@tirfonline.org.

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 publications resulting from TIRF-funded research should be sent electronically to info@tirfonline.org. In addition, all publications and professional presentations resulting from a TIRF grant must acknowledge the support of TIRF.

TIRF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANT 2012 PROPOSAL FORMAT

Items 1-5 must be sent in a single document.

1. Cover page must contain each of the following pieces of information.

- Title of project
- Type of grant application: **Doctoral Dissertation Grant**
- TIRF Priority to be researched
 - Bilingualism/Plurilingualism in Business, Industry, and the Professions
 - Language Assessment
 - Language Teacher Education
 - Optimal Uses of Technology in the Delivery of English Language Instruction
 - Students' Age and Effective English Language Education in Schools
- Name 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.
- Name, address, and email address of the research supervisor or advisor.

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

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

- **Statement of research issue:** State the problem and its relationship to a [current TIRF research priority](#).
- **Theoretical background:** Please integrate within this section the research literature that you are drawing upon to situate your study; you must convince the reviewers that you are familiar with current, relevant research in the area of the research priority.



- **Research methodology:** Articulate the research questions (and/or hypotheses) and clearly explain what data collection and data analysis procedures will be used. The data collection and analysis procedures must be well chosen to address the research question(s).
 - **Implications:** Provide a statement of the likely implications of the proposed research for theory, policy, and practice
 - **Timetable:** Provide a clear timetable (in months) of the tasks that will be accomplished in order to complete the research and write the dissertation.
 - **Plans for dissemination:** Include the scholarly conferences at which you would likely present the research results and the journals or other forms of publication that would be appropriate. TIRF must be acknowledged in all types of dissemination.
 - **Research ethics:** Provide a 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.
 - **References:** Provide an up-to-date list of selected references (one to two pages maximum) in APA format. References are not included in the six-page limit for your detailed proposal.
4. Detailed budget and brief rationale for all items (two pages maximum)
- Itemized expenses (e.g., personnel, transportation, communication, dissemination supplies and other expenses).
 - Please note that computer hardware is not an allowable budget item. Conference travel is limited to \$2,000. Travel for data collection and/or required researcher-meetings is allowable. A rationale is needed for all budget items. Please be as specific as possible and indicate all costs in United States dollars. Also, please make sure to include a final total amount.
 - If applicable, provide a statement about other research funding applied for or received for the same project or for a larger/related study. Also explain 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 TIRF Grant Features section, above.
 - The budget is not included in the six-page limit of the detailed proposal.
5. A short, current CV for the applicant (two pages maximum) must be contained within the master document.
- Please do **not** send separate attachment files for each section of the proposal, including this one.
 - The two-page CV is not included in the six-page limit.
6. Letter from doctoral supervisor
A letter of support (one page maximum) must be uploaded to TIRF's website by the



The International Research Foundation

for English Language Education

doctoral student's supervisor. Supervisors may [click here](#) to upload the document. (After clicking the link, the supervisor must select "Supervisor Letter of Support for DDG Applicants" and complete the remaining fields. It is important to include the DDG applicant's name in the "Subject Title or Description" field.) Supervisors will receive a confirmation email from TIRF within three business days notifying them that their letter of support has been received.

Please do not submit letters from more than one supervisor. To be eligible, applicants 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 appropriate faculty board. The letter from the research supervisor should comment on the applicant's readiness and ability to undertake the proposed research project. The supervisor should also indicate whether s/he has read the proposal that is being submitted. Applicants should make sure their supervisors understand that the letters of recommendation are essential to the DDG proposal adjudication process and must be submitted by the stated application deadline.

[Click here to submit your 2012 DDG proposal.](#)