



**The International Research Foundation**  
**for English Language Education**

## **CALL FOR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION** **GRANT PROPOSALS – 2016**

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:**  
**Wednesday, April 20, 2016**  
**(11:59pm Pacific Daylight Time – Canada/USA)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF) was founded in 1998 as 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 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 also committed to strengthening links between theory, practice, and policy and to fostering partnerships among researchers around the world. One of the activities TIRF undertakes to advance its mission is the funding of doctoral research.

### **Description**

In 2016, 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 Wednesday, April 20, 2016.



## **Eligibility**

There are two types of Doctoral Dissertation Grants (DDG) offered by TIRF in 2016.

### *TIRF DDG:*

The first is our long-standing TIRF DDG, which is supported by Cambridge English Language Assessment and many of our individual donors. To be eligible for this type of DDG, an applicant **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 required by his/her university and will have had his/her dissertation research plan approved by a faculty committee. This criterion is absolutely necessary and must be confirmed by the doctoral candidate's research supervisor in the supervisor's required letter of support.



### *TIRF-British Council DDG:*

The other type of grant offered by TIRF is the TIRF-British Council DDG. To be eligible for this type of award, all of the requirements listed in the paragraph immediately above must be met by the applicant. In addition, to be eligible for this type of award, doctoral candidates must either be from the countries and/or attending universities in the countries on the OECD DAC list of countries:

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DAC%20List%20of%20ODA%20Recipients%202014%20final.pdf>.

As an alternative, candidates may be attending universities in other countries but be doing research that has the potential to make a positive impact on language education in developing nations. The Foundation is particularly interested in research proposals that have clear implications for educational policy makers and others in positions to make decisions about English language education practices. Thus doctoral students from countries on the [OECD DAC](#) list are eligible, as are candidates whose work has the potential to directly and positively influence English language education in those countries.





## **TIRF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION GRANTS**

### **Research Priorities**

Proposals for TIRF DDGs should closely and explicitly address one of these research priorities. A detailed explanation of TIRF's research priorities can be found by [clicking here](#). Then, click on any of the research priorities to learn more (or click on the links below).

- [Digital Technology in Language Education](#)
- [English as a Medium of Instruction](#)
- [Language Assessment](#)
- [Language Policy and Planning](#)
- [Language Teacher Education](#)
- [Plurilingualism in Business, Industry, the Professions, and Educational Contexts](#)
- [Students' Age and Effective English Language Education in Schools](#)

### **Features of the TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grants**

- DDGs are awarded for up to US \$5,000 per proposal. Smaller sums may be awarded and are dependent on the budget for the proposal and the ranking of the proposal.
- Allocations of funds are made subject to budgetary availability.
- TIRF will allow a maximum of \$2,000 for conference travel in the budget for a DDG. Items related to conference travel that are allowed in the budget include conference or workshop registration fees, accommodations, and transportation. Additional travel funds may be allocated in the budget for data collection or essential researcher meetings. Personal expenses, such as the cost of tuition, storage, moving, insurance, childcare, income replacement, editing the dissertation, 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 researchers in other contexts can easily interpret the results. 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, 2018. The final report should be written for a general audience, and the report should reflect current



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APA formatting guidelines in both the summary and the reference list. TIRF also requires a final financial report by August 31, 2018, documenting how the funding was used. Final reports should be sent to [info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org).

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

## **TIRF DDGs FUNDED IN PREVIOUS YEARS**

### **Characteristics of Successful Proposals**

To complete their proposals, applicants will want to use the application form (link provided below). We expect that successful applicants will supply all of the required information and not exceed the page limits. 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 clearly articulated the research question(s) and/or hypothesis/es;
- have provided detailed accounts of the data collection and data analysis methods to be used;
- show scholarly and professional promise, as judged from the activities and prior publications documented on the applicants' CVs;
- have research projects that can be completed in one year;
- have projects that articulate 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 question(s) and/or hypothesis/es; and
- have used, where suitable, a multi-methods research design.

### **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 (i.e., has not been advanced to candidacy).



- The proposal does not fit well with any of TIRF’s research priorities.
- TIRF’s proposal guidelines have not been followed carefully.
- The proposal has not been carefully proofread.
- The proposal is poorly written.
- The literature review is weak (incomplete, not up to date, etc.)
- The reference list is inaccurate, incomplete, or does not follow APA format.

In the application form, TIRF asks applicants to indicate whether their supervisors have provided feedback on the applications. 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 **Wednesday, April 20, 2016** (11:59 p.m., Pacific Daylight Time — Canada/USA).
- Complete the [DDG application form](#).
- All applications must be submitted electronically via TIRF’s website using a single PDF document that includes all parts of the completed application. (The DDG proposal format is found near the end of this call for proposals.) 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 in any given competition year. If multiple copies of an applicant’s proposal are submitted, only the first one received will be processed.
- Acknowledgement of the receipt of an application will be sent to the email address provided by the applicant within three businesses days after the file is uploaded. If an applicant has not had his/her application acknowledged within three business days of sending it, he/she should contact [info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org) using the subject heading “DDG Application Received?”
- If an applicant has any difficulties submitting his/her proposal electronically, he/she should send an email to [info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org) using the subject heading “2016 DDG Application – Technical Difficulty.”
- 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. TIRF's RAC 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, 2016**. The project summaries of successful proposals and photographs of grant recipients will be posted on TIRF's website by October 31, 2016.

For DDG award recipients, progress reports are expected at approximately six-month intervals: by February 1, 2017; August 1, 2017; and February 1, 2018.

Funding will be paid 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 benchmarks).
2. In the first interim report, awardees must note which of their research benchmarks 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 2016 competition are due by August 31, 2018. Final reports should be sent to [info@tirfonline.org](mailto:info@tirfonline.org). Requests for extensions beyond this date must be approved by TIRF; otherwise, monies for final payments may not be available.
4. TIRF's preferred method of payment is by check. However, in instances of paying grantees who cannot cash a check drawn on a US-based bank account, we will transmit payments via PayPal. Thus, grant recipients living outside the US will need to create a



PayPal account to accept payment. Should a DDG recipient request a direct, bank-to-bank wire transfer, the fees associated for such a transfer will be deducted from the grantee's award. The fees for bank transfers are very costly and cannot be estimated before they are initiated. TIRF will not under any circumstance provide a grantee with an audit trail for the transferring of award monies.

TIRF reserves the right to use information from project proposal summaries and final reports, including the grant recipient's photograph and email address, for dissemination on its website and in other media. Copies of publications resulting from TIRF-funded research should be sent electronically as PDFs to [info@tirfonline.org](mailto: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 2016 PROPOSAL FORMAT**

**You must use the DDG application form when submitting your file. [Click here](#) to download the application form. Note that regardless of which award you are applying for (Cambridge or British Council), only one application form needs to be submitted.**

**Items 1-5 must be sent in a single document. Be sure to save your file as a PDF before uploading it to TIRF's website.**

**A series of resource videos have been developed to help you complete the application. [Click here](#) to view the videos.**

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

- Title of project
- TIRF Priority to be researched
  - Digital Technology in Educational Contexts
  - English as a Medium of Instruction
  - Language Assessment
  - Language Policy and Planning
  - Language Teacher Education
  - Plurilingualism in Business, Industry, the Professions, and Educational Contexts
  - Students' Age and Effective English Language Education in Schools
- Your full name and affiliation(s)
- Your email, phone, fax, and mailing address.
- Name, address, and email address of the research supervisor or advisor.
- Indicate whether you are eligible for a TIRF-British Council award.
- Indicate that your supervisor has provided you feedback on your application.



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 general audience in mind, and please proofread your proposal carefully.
  
3. Detailed proposal (six-page maximum, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman 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) and/or test the hypotheses.
  - **Implications:** Provide a clear 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 be likely to present the research results. Also list 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 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 (please use 6<sup>th</sup> edition). References are not included in the six-page limit for your detailed proposal.
  
4. Detailed budget and brief rationale for all items (two-page maximum):
  - Itemized expenses directly related to the research (e.g., personnel, transportation, communication, dissemination, supplies, and other expenses).
  - Please note that computer hardware is not an allowable budget item. Personal expenses, such as the cost of tuition, storage, moving, insurance, childcare, income replacement, and rent, are not permissible budget items. Conference travel is limited to \$2,000. Travel funds for data collection and/or required researcher-meetings are allowable. A brief 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 and double-check that the total is correct.
  - 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: You 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 (two pages maximum) must be included within the master document uploaded to the TIRF website.

- 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:

Supervisor letters are due on the same day the DDG applications are due. A **one-page letter of support** must be uploaded to TIRF's website by the doctoral student's supervisor. Supervisors **must first save the letter as a PDF** and then [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, you 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 your readiness and ability as an applicant to undertake the proposed research project. The supervisor should also indicate that he/she 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 2016 DDG proposal.](#)