

**Society for Prevention Research  
26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting  
Washington, DC**

**Pre-Conference Workshop III**

**Date:** Tuesday, May 29, 2018

**Time:** 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**How to Write a Research Grant Application to the Institute of Education Sciences: (IES) Bringing Prevention Science Ideas to Education Research**

**Presented by:** Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

**Presenters:** Katherine A. Taylor, Ph.D., Emily J. Doolittle, Ph.D., Jacquelyn A. Buckley, Ph.D., Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

**Description:**

This workshop will provide instruction and advice on writing a successful application to the Institute of Education Sciences' (IES) Education Research Grants Program (84.305A) and Special Education Research Grants Program (84.324A). The workshop will focus on 1) the research topics that make up these two grant programs, 2) the research goal structure under which these programs operate, and 3) the four sections of the Research Narrative (Significance, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources) that comprise the most important part of the grant application. This workshop will also include a focus on IES' relatively newer requirement that its grantees disseminate the findings of their IES research projects in appropriate ways to a variety of researcher and non-researcher audiences. Direct instruction on these topics will be accompanied by review of examples, application to participants' own work, and discussion.

Applicants make a large investment in writing an application to IES' grant programs (and peer reviewers make a substantial time investment in reading them). Applications that do not address all of the requirements for the four sections of the research narrative are not accepted for review and are a poor investment of applicant time. Applications that do not respond well to the requirements and the Institute's recommendations for a strong application often receive poor reviews and again represent a poor investment of applicant time and reviewer time. Although the peer review process provides feedback on substantive issues, it is more efficient for applicants to learn how to better present their intended research and avoid common pitfalls before submitting their application. This short course seeks to help applicants write clearer, responsive applications that can be judged on their substantive merits by the peer reviewers.

**Specific Learning Objectives:**

Participants will gain the following knowledge and skills:

- *Understanding of how the IES grant programs support the optimization of prevention science, specifically in relation to researcher-practitioner partnerships, innovative research designs (e.g., SMART designs), and continuous improvement of education interventions;*
- Knowledge of the research topics under the Education and Special Education Research Grants programs, including *how to choose a topic;*
- Knowledge of the IES research goals, including the *purpose of each goal and acceptable/appropriate research designs for each;*

- Understanding of *critical information that should be provided* in each section of the Research Narrative portion of an IES grant application (Significance, Research Plan, Personnel, and Resources);
- Understanding of *common pitfalls in writing an IES application*;
- Grant writing skills, including *how to clearly communicate* the significance of their research, develop/present a theory of change model, develop and organize a research plan, build a strong team, and plan for dissemination.

**Target workshop audience:**

Participants should be in a position to submit an application to IES grant competitions. They can include experienced researchers who have never submitted to IES, early career researchers, and finishing graduate students who are taking on a position in the prevention science or education research field. Participants are expected to be familiar with the IES Requests for Applications (see <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/>) and have the skills needed to conduct such research. Participants should bring a draft application or a well-thought out research idea that they can revise throughout the course as they learn new information and skills.

**Materials for Attendees:**

Participants will receive copies of the presentation slides.

**Workshop Outline:**

- A. Introduction (Katherine)
  - a. Participants identify their research issue
  - b. Overview of IES, its grants programs, and the peer review process
- B. The Structured Abstract (Jacquelyn)
  - a. Using the abstract to think about and organize a research idea for this workshop
- C. Research Topics (Emily and Jacquelyn)
  - a. Lecture on the topics within the Education Research Grants Program and the Special Education Research Grants program
  - b. Examples of work being done under different topics
  - c. Participants identify which topic their research issue falls under
- D. Research Goals (Katherine and Emily)
  - a. Lecture on the five goals, including the purpose of each and appropriate designs (highlighting how research to optimize prevention can be done under each goal and how certain designs are particularly conducive to this work, e.g., SMART designs)
  - b. Examples of prevention-related work being done under each goal
  - c. Participants identify the goal they would like to do research under
- E. Break into small groups of people interested in doing work under same goal (and topic if possible)
- F. Overview of the Research Narrative portion of the application (Katherine)
- G. The Significance Section of the Research Narrative (Emily)
  - a. Lecture on what does and does not need to be included in this section
  - b. Go over examples of clear and unclear Significance sections

- c. Each small group reads 1-2 Significance sections from applications addressing their goal and evaluates them. Depending on the number of participants/small groups, IES personnel will either be assigned to one group or circulate and answer questions\*
  - d. Individuals evaluate the significance section of their draft application and determine what to add, revise, or subtract. IES personnel will answer individual questions\*
  - e. Return to class format and take comments and answer questions
- H. Research Method section of Research Narrative (Jacquelyn)
- a. Lecture on what does and does not need to be included in this section
  - b. Go over examples of clear and unclear Methods sections with entire class
  - c. Small groups read 1-2 Methods sections from applications addressing their goal and evaluate them. Depending on the number of participants/small groups, IES personnel will either be assigned to one group or circulate and answer questions\*
  - d. Individuals evaluate the Methods section of their draft application and determine what to add, revise, or subtract. IES personnel will answer individual questions\*
  - e. Return to class format and take comments and answer questions
- I. Personnel section of Research Narrative (Emily)
- a. Lecture on what should be included in this section and how this information should link to the Research Plan
  - b. Reflection by participants on whether they have the personnel to carry out their proposed research and how they could describe each team member's expertise and role in a way that clearly links to the Research Plan\*
  - c. Return to class format for questions or comments
- J. Resources section of Research Narrative (Katherine)
- a. Lecture on what should be included in this section and how this information should link to the Research Plan
  - b. Reflection by participants on whether they have the resources to carry out their proposed research and how they could link the resources to the Research Plan\*
  - c. Return to class format for questions or comments
- K. Other important sections of the application (Jacquelyn and Emily)
- a. Dissemination plan
  - b. Letters of support (and the importance of demonstrating partnerships with schools)
  - c. Data management plan

*\*Hands-on learning experience*

**Presenters:**

Katherine A. Taylor, Ph.D. ([Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov](mailto:Katherine.Taylor@ed.gov); (202) 245-6716), Education Research Analyst in the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSE) at the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Qualifications: Dr. Taylor joined IES in 2015 and is the Program Officer for the following research topics under the Special Education Research Grants program: Professional Development for Teachers and School-Based Service Providers, Cognition and Student Learning in Special Education, and Special Education Policy, Finance, and Systems. She also oversees the Postdoctoral Research Training Program in Special Education and Early

Intervention and the Early Career Development and Mentoring program. She has led several IES webinars on specific grant programs (e.g., Early Career Development and Mentoring) as well general overviews of IES, grant writing and the application process. She has also presented on similar topics at numerous conferences and provides ongoing technical assistance to new and returning applicants.

Emily J. Doolittle, Ph.D. ([Emily.Doolittle@ed.gov](mailto:Emily.Doolittle@ed.gov); (202) 245-7833), Team Lead for SocialBehavioral Research in the National Center for Education Research (NCER) at the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Qualifications: Dr. Doolittle joined IES in 2008 and is the Program Officer for the following research topic under the Education Research Grants program: Social and Behavioral Context for Academic Learning. She is also the Team Lead for Social Behavioral Research at NCER. She takes a lead role in writing NCER's requests for applications and works closely with a wide-variety of researchers to provide technical assistance both individually and through webinars and workshops on IES grant writing and the application process.

Jacquelyn A. Buckley, Ph.D. ([Jacquelyn.Buckley@ed.gov](mailto:Jacquelyn.Buckley@ed.gov); (202) 245-6607), Team Lead for Disability Research in the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSEER) at the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Qualifications: Dr. Buckley joined IES in 2006 and is the Program Officer for the following research topics under the Special Education Research Grants program: Social and Behavioral Outcomes to Support Learning and Families of Children with Disabilities. She is also the Team Lead for Disability Research at NCSEER. She takes a lead role in writing NCSEER's requests for applications, has led several IES grant writing workshops at local and national conferences, and has conducted numerous webinars on specific grant programs as well as grant writing. She also provides ongoing technical assistance to new and returning applicants