

**Society for Prevention Research
27th Annual Meeting
San Francisco, CA**

Pre-Conference Workshop V

Date: Tuesday, May 28, 2019

Time: 1:00 pm – 5:30 pm

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

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

Presenter:

Emily J. Doolittle, Ph.D., Team Lead for Social Behavioral Research in the National Center for Education Research (NCER) at the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Description:

This course 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 focus on two newer requirements for IES grant applications: to disseminate findings in appropriate ways to a variety of audiences, and to analyze cost and cost effectiveness of education interventions. Consistent with the findings of the SPR Training Needs Assessment Task Force (TNATF), the workshop will highlight opportunities for longitudinal research design and data analysis projects through these grant programs, including the "big" data sets available through IES' National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for secondary data analyses. 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 IES' 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, including through secondary data analyses of large education data sets such as those available through IES' National Center for Education Statistics (NCES);*

- Knowledge of the research topics under the Education and Special Education Research 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 *newer IES requirements* for dissemination to non-research audiences (practitioners, policymakers, parents, the general public) and intervention cost and cost effectiveness;
- Understanding of *common pitfalls* in writing an IES application;
- Grant writing skills, including *how to clearly communicate* the significance of the research idea, develop/present a theory of change model, develop and organize a research plan, build a strong team, and plan for dissemination.

Target 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
 - a. Participants identify their research issue
 - b. Overview of IES, its grants programs, and the peer review process
- B. Research Topics
 - 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
- C. Research Goals
 - a. Lecture on the five goals, including the purpose of each and appropriate designs (*highlighting how research to use large data sets can be done under each goal and how certain research goals are particularly conducive to this work, e.g., the Exploration goal*)
 - b. Examples of prevention-related work being done under each goal
 - c. Participants identify the goal they would like to do research under
- D. Break into small groups of people interested in doing work under same goal (and topic if possible)
- E. Overview of the Research Narrative portion of the application

- F. The Significance Section of the Research Narrative
 - 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.*
 - d. Individuals evaluate the significance section of their draft application and determine what to add, revise, or subtract. IES personnel will circulate and answer individual questions*
 - e. Return to class format and take comments and answer questions

- G. Research Method section of Research Narrative
 - a. Lecture on what does and does not need to be included in this section, including plans for *analyzing cost and cost effectiveness* of education interventions
 - 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. IES personnel will circulate and answer individual questions*
 - d. Individuals evaluate the Methods section of their draft application and determine what to add, revise, or subtract. IES personnel will circulate and answer individual questions*
 - e. Return to class format and take comments and answer questions

- H. Personnel section of Research Narrative
 - 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

- I. 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

- J. 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*

Presenter:

Dr. Emily 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.