

South Dakota Alliance for Distance Education (SDADE)
South Dakota's Star Schools Project



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Action Research Awards - \$2000

I. POLICIES

Awards are to encourage and support **action research** about distance education in South Dakota. Teachers are especially encouraged to apply. Background and experience in educational research is not required. A workshop on research procedures will be held for successful applicants. This program does not fund requests for curriculum development, inservice training or workshops, unless there is a significant research component of the project. SDADE research activities are managed by the Programs in Instructional Technology and Distance Education, Nova Southeastern University.

A. Educational Research

Types

This project supports both **basic** and **applied/action-oriented** research.

1. basic research ---
Basic research is pursued without regard for the immediate applicability of the results to practical situations. Although the investigators may ultimately be interested in the application of their findings, they do not allow this interest to determine their choice of problem, theory, and research procedures. Basic research is more interested in methodological and theoretical rigor than in practical relevance. For example, a basic research study might concern the identification of different learning styles of students in a distance learning activity.
2. applied/ action-oriented research ---
Applied/ action-oriented research is pursued primarily to develop techniques and products that will have immediate classroom use. Although the early phases of applied research may occur in laboratory classrooms, the research purpose is the development of specific products which will be tested (or proved) later under ordinary classroom conditions. Applied research is more interested in educational relevance than in methodological and theoretical rigor. An example of an applied research study would be research on the effectiveness of interactive study guides in a math class.

Approaches

A wide range of research approaches, from quantitative to qualitative, is acceptable. Studies appropriately using qualitative methodologies are encouraged.

Method

There are widely accepted techniques for conducting educational research. The techniques collectively are called the **scientific method**.

Award applicants are encouraged to utilize the scientific method. Depending upon whether the quantitative or qualitative approach is selected, the detail, labeling, and/or sequence of conducting the following elements may vary.

Elements of the scientific method usually include:

- definition of the problem
- development of hypotheses or models to be tested/measured/assessed
- development of a study design and measuring instruments/processes
- data collection
- data analysis
- conclusions and inferences

NOTE: For further information regarding educational research, refer to sources such as:

Ary, Donald; Jacobs, Luch Cheser; and Razavich, Asghar. Introduction to Research in Education (Third Edition). Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.

Bogden, Robert C. and Sari Biklen. Qualitative Research for Education. Allyn and Bacon.

Borg, Walter R. and Gall, Meredith Damin. Educational Research, An Introduction. (Fifth Edition). Longman.

Kerlinger, Fred N. Foundations of Behavioral Research. (Third Edition). Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Wittrock, Merlic C., editor. Handbook of Research on Teaching. (Third Edition). Macmillan Publishing Company.

Priority Areas for Proposals

Award applications should address one or more of the following general priority areas:

1. Distance Education in South Dakota
2. The Digital Dakota Network
3. Diffusion of Innovations Theory
4. The South Dakota Alliance for Distance Education
5. Studies that build on previous Star Schools funded research

II. ELIGIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Eligibility

Award proposals from both institutions and individuals (who are associated with an institution/organization) will be accepted, but all must be from South

Dakota applicants or have at least one in-state applicant. Graduate students are especially encouraged to apply. Priority is given to those who have completed a South Dakota Distance Teaching and Learning Academy.

When the proposed research study would be strengthened through joint efforts with other eligible applicants, such collaboration is favored. Collaboration with others in whose interests research is undertaken ensures a fuller perspective and eliminates the gap between researcher and "researched".

Any eligible institution or individual may submit more than one proposal.

B. Availability and Use of Funds

The range of awards for 2001 will be up to \$2000.

One half of the approved award funding will be provided at the beginning of the award period. One half will be available after satisfactory completion of the research study.

Awards will be made for the period (October 1 – January 15, 2002).

A one page interim report will be required, and a final report will be due 30 days after completion of the study. Reports in journal article form are encouraged. All final reports will be published in the *Handbook of Action Research on Distance Education in South Dakota*.

III. PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS

Proposal Format

For proposals to be considered, they should contain the following elements in the order indicated:

- Cover Page
- Research Proposal Summary
- Narrative
- Summary of Budget Estimates
- Budget Explanation
- Appendices (one-page vita of key personnel and other significant appendices)

Cover Page

The cover page should include the project's title, the investigator's name, address, and phone number, and the investigator's institution.

Research Proposal Summary

The summary is to be a clear and simple description of the proposed research study. State the objectives of the proposed research study and its basic elements. Provide as much detail as possible within the space limitations. The summary should be one page, or less.

Prepare the research proposal summary for publication purposes. It should highlight the importance of the study and be able to stand alone.

Narrative

The narrative should not exceed eight (8) pages double-spaced. The narrative should include:

1. Significance and Need

Conduct a short review of relevant literature and relate it to your research questions. Provide a clear statement and description of the need for research in the topic area to be addressed. **Build a case for the need for your research study.**

2. Study Description

Clearly describe the purpose of the proposed research; state measurable objectives for the study, making certain each objective relates to the study's purpose.

3. Plan of Operation/Methodology

Describe the methods/procedures to be followed to achieve the objectives and state why they were selected. In your discussion, address:

- a. study design
- b. responsibilities of key personnel
- c. plan for monitoring and addressing progress

4. Timetable of Activities

Identify the study's starting date, termination date, and other significant progress points. Use milestone charts and/or other graphics to outline activities throughout the research study period, if appropriate. If possible the study should be completed by January 1, 2002.

5. Expected Outcomes

Describe the anticipated outcomes related to the proposed research objectives.

6. Applicability of Research Results

Discuss why results or products of the proposed work can be expected to lead to better practices of distance education in South Dakota and/or identify the need for and guide further research.

7. Evidence of Collaboration

If applicable, describe collaborative efforts (who, what, how) to be carried out.

8. Personnel Qualifications

Briefly describe the education and experience of the researcher and other key personnel and relate these qualifications to the proposed study activities.

Include vitae of key personnel in an appendix. Each vita should be one page in length (maximum) and should indicate the individual's qualifications for the proposed research study.

Budget Matters

A Budget Summary is required.

In a separate "Budget Explanation" section, identify and justify components of each major item in the budget. The explanation should briefly state why an item is important and how the prospective cost was estimated.

Requests for funding should relate to **future** expenditures.

Proposals showing in-kind contributions and/or matching funds are encouraged. In-kind contributions are property or services that support the research study but do not represent a "real dollar" expenditure. Matching funds are funds provided by the applicant, which are equal to or a portion of the costs requested. An applicant's matching contribution may be in the form of dollar expenditures or in-kind services/resources.

Appendices

One appendix is required: That which includes the vitae of key personnel. (Each vita should be a maximum of one page in length.) In addition, appendices may be used sparingly to provide background or supporting information. It should be kept in mind, however, that reviewer's time is limited, so voluminous appendices may not be studied carefully.

IV. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

1. Two copies of the complete proposal are required.
2. Copy must be double-spaced on one side only of 8 1/2 X 11 white paper.
3. Pages are to be numbered.
4. Proposal copies are to be assembled in the order previously described and stapled but not otherwise bound.
5. The cover page is the only letter of transmittal needed or desired. Institutional letters of endorsement (e.g., from major professors) or transmittal, supporting letters, etc., should be placed in appendices.
6. Proposals must be mailed by October 1, 2001, or hand delivered by 5:00 p.m. on October 1, 2001 to:
 - South Dakota Alliance for Distance Education
 - C/o Tracy Vik and Michael Simonson
 - Department of Education and Cultural Affairs
 - 700 Governors Drive
 - Pierre, SD 57501
7. Questions may be directed to SDADE at (605) 773 - 6118 or (954) 262 - 8563.

Timetable

Application packets made available	8/15/01
Completed applications (2 copies) due	10/1/01
Announcement of awards	10/15/01
Funds made available to researcher	10/15/01
Approximate date of workshop	10/15/01

V. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Review Process

A review panel will evaluate applications. The panel will select for award those proposals, which, in its judgment, offer the greatest potential for improving education in South Dakota classrooms. In some cases, negotiation with the applicant will be conducted.

Evaluation Criteria

Three general criteria will guide the review panel; they are the proposal's significance, its feasibility, and its appropriateness for funding support.

Reviewers will examine proposals and submit comments based on the specific criteria included with this document.

VIII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Human Subjects

The protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research and related activities is the responsibility of the awardee.

Notification of Final Action

Notification of awards is made in writing. Individuals whose proposals were not selected will be advised as promptly as possible.

VI. RESEARCH STUDY AND AWARD MANAGEMENT

Award Administration

Awards will be administered in accordance with the terms and conditions of this document.

An award is normally made to an organization or individual, known as the awardee. Notification of an award is made by letter. The award establishes a relationship in which:

- A. The SDADE agrees to provide financial support for the research study to be performed under the provisions of the award guidelines and contractual agreement.

- B. The awardee agrees to perform the research study, to manage prudently the funds provided by the award, and to adhere to the provisions of the award guidelines and contractual agreement.

The awardee is free to accept or to reject the award. Normally, the proposal to obtain funds constitutes acceptance of an award once it is made.

All written inquiries of a programmatic or technical nature should be directed to the Instructional Technology and Distance Education program, Nova Southeastern University, 1750 NE 167th St. North Miami Beach, FL 33162 (954) 262 - 8563.

The award period extends from the effective date of the award through the expiration date. It is that span of time during which the objectives of the study are to be achieved and the award funds are available for appropriate obligation. This period may be longer than the duration of the study in order to allow time for preparation of reports after the study is concluded. All commitments of award funds should be made during the award period.

No-Cost Extensions

It is expected that research studies will be completed within the time period specified in the award instrument. When the work is delayed, a no-cost extension may be requested. This request, along with a justification, should be received at least 45 days before the award expiration date.

Changes in Research Study Operation

Although major changes in the conduct of the study may be proposed at any time, changes in the scope, objectives, budget, and/or professional personnel of the study should be approved in advance.

If the proposed research study is not completed, the awardee will provide an accounting of funds spent and return unexpended funds.

Research Study Reporting Requirements

Interim Report. A one page interim report should be submitted no later than three months after funding is provided.

Final Research Study Report. Two copies of the Final Research Study Report are to be submitted within 30 days after expiration of the award. Extensions may be awarded if requested.

The purpose of a Final Report is to provide a factual account of the research study for the record. It will be published in the *Handbook of Action Research on Distance Education in South Dakota*.

Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, and Civil Rights Policy Statement

The SDADE is committed to the principles and concepts of affirmative action, equal opportunity and civil rights. In awarding research awards, the SDADE will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, or handicap.

By submitting a proposal, prospective awardees certify they will carry out proposed award functions in an environment free of discrimination.