



*Advancement of the Highest Quality Education Research and
Its Use in Policy Formation and Practice*

July 2011

Dear Applicant:

Below you will find instructions and a link to the online application for the National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship.

This postdoctoral fellowship was established in 1986 by the National Academy of Education (NAEd) with a grant from the Spencer Foundation. The fellowship program is intended to support early career scholars working in critical areas of education research. To that end, the NAEd seeks to fund proposals that promise to make significant scholarly contributions to the field of education and to advance the careers of the recipients.

Applications are reviewed by NAEd members and judged on the applicant's past research record, career trajectory, and the quality of the project described in the application. To date, the Academy has funded more than 680 postdoctoral fellows. This year we anticipate receiving over 200 applications, and will be awarding up to twenty fellowships to begin during the 2012 – 2013 academic year.

The fellowships of \$55,000 are intended as salary replacement for one year and to cover other research expenses outlined in the proposal. Fellows must not receive other funding in support of their proposed research during the grant period. Fellows will also receive additional funds to attend required fellowship retreats and NAEd meetings.

Please read all of the enclosed materials carefully as you prepare your application, and feel free to contact us by e-mail at info@naeducation.org if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Gregory White
Executive Director

Jennifer Tinch
Director, Membership &
Professional Development Programs

**2012 NATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION/SPENCER
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANT

Please read carefully before starting an application

Purpose

The National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship supports early career scholars working in critical areas of education research. This nonresidential postdoctoral fellowship funds proposals that make significant scholarly contributions to the field of education. The program also develops the careers of its recipients through professional development activities involving National Academy of Education (NAEd) members.

Eligibility

- Applicants must have received their PhD, EdD, or equivalent research degree between January 1, 2006, and December 31, 2011.
- Applications must be made by the individual applying for the fellowship. Group applications will not be accepted.
- The proposed project must be a research project.
- Applicants may not be employees of the Spencer Foundation or the National Academy of Education.

Stipulations

- Fellows may not receive other concurrent funding for their project during the tenure of their fellowship. Also, Fellows may not hold a separate grant from the Spencer Foundation during their fellowship period.
- Fellows must receive approval for their project from a human subjects review board prior to release of fellowship funds.

Award

The fellowship of \$55,000 will be awarded to up to twenty scholars in 2012. Fellows may elect to take the fellowship full-time over one year or half-time over two years. This is a non-residential fellowship. Scholars may conduct their research at their home institution or at another research site that they have arranged. During their fellowship tenure, fellows are required to attend professional development retreats hosted by the NAEd and to make a formal presentation of their research to the Academy. The NAEd provides additional travel funds for fellows to attend these meetings.

Selection Process

Complete and eligible applications will be reviewed by a selection committee of members of the National Academy of Education. Forty to fifty semifinalists will be selected and notified of their status in March 2012. Semifinalist applications will be reviewed by two additional NAEd members and finalists will be notified of the award in May 2012.

Preparing the Application

Please use the online application available at www.gooddonegreat.com/grants/naed/

For any uploaded documents, please do not use type smaller than 12 point Times New Roman (250 words per double-spaced page) and do not reduce your documents—the selection committee members must be able to read what you send. All applications and documents **MUST** be submitted in English. All uploaded documents must be in pdf format.

Do not include cover letters, a table of contents, or any additional materials.

Please Note: The selection committee has recommended that the National Academy of Education reject, upon arrival, any application that does not conform to these guidelines. *Please read and follow the guidelines carefully to insure that your application is not rejected prior to review.* Please pay close attention to word and page limits.

Application Components:

1. **APPLICATION FORM:** Only applications from individuals will be accepted. You must use the online application available at www.gooddonegreat.com/grants/naed/.
2. Provide an **ABSTRACT** of no more than **1000 characters (including spaces)** of the proposed research project. This will be entered in a textbox on the online application form.
3. Provide a **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** of no more than **2,500 words** (ten pages, double-spaced). You may attach one extra page (single-spaced) for references. This document will be uploaded to the online application form. Include the goals of the project, its contribution to the field, and the significance of the work, especially as it relates to education. Provide evidence that you have a solid plan for conducting the proposed study. Describe the research methods, data analysis, and interpretation techniques. Describe the manner in which the outlined inquiry is part of a larger context of work, and give examples of that larger context. Your project description will be read by educators with varying backgrounds; please write your description in terms understood by a broad educational audience and avoid the use of esoteric terminology. Please refer to the “Guidelines for Writing a Proposal for the National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship” below for suggestions.
4. Provide a **CAREER STATEMENT** of no more than **2500 characters** in narrative form, describing the professional autobiographical context in which the interests to be pursued in your proposal have developed. This will be entered in a textbox on the online application form. Indicate your future plans as far as they have been formulated, and the ways in which the proposed research contributes to your long-term professional goals.

5. Provide an **EXAMPLE OF YOUR PAST RESEARCH RELEVANT TO EDUCATION** that you believe demonstrates your promise as a researcher and your ability to complete the proposed project. This document will be uploaded to the online application form. The example is limited to a total of **twenty (20) double-spaced pages** (including references). You may submit a chapter of a book, an article, or other research. Your writing sample may be published or unpublished. If you do not have an example that is within the twenty-page limit, you may edit a longer piece. You must submit English translations of your "Example of Past Research" if it was published in any other language.

6. Provide a **CURRICULUM VITAE/RESUME**. This document will be uploaded to the online application form. Please include all of the following items or your application will be considered incomplete:

- a) **Education** beyond high school (include any professional education beyond the highest earned degree), beginning with most recent program of study; do not use acronyms. Be sure to include name of institution, location, major/minor, degree, and date awarded.
- b) Previous related **employment**, beginning with most recent; do not use acronyms. Be sure to include title, organization name, location, and dates.
- c) List **honors**, awards or fellowships received; do not use acronyms. Please include title and date.
- d) List of **publications** and research relevant to education.

7. **REPEAT APPLICANTS ONLY: PROJECT SUMMARY.** Repeat applicants must provide title and one paragraph summary of their previous proposal(s) for every year applied. This will be entered into a textbox on the online application form.

8. **REFERENCES.** The online application form will allow you to enter the names and e-mail addresses for three references. Once you provide their e-mail addresses, the online application form will send an automated e-mail to each reference, providing them with a link to enter their reference material online. You will be notified via e-mail when the reference has submitted their materials, but you will not see the reference materials. You may submit your application prior to having the reference materials submitted, but your application will be considered incomplete if your references have not submitted their materials by the deadline.

Only three referee evaluations will be used. If you request more than three, we will use **ONLY** the first three received. Please provide the e-mail addresses for your recommenders early. You need to allow sufficient time to insure that your referees submit their evaluations to in time to meet our deadline.

Please note, due to the volume of applications received, NAEEd cannot confirm receipt of your application via telephone, but you will receive an automated e-mail upon submission of your application.

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS: This is a NON-RESIDENTIAL FELLOWSHIP; international applicants are encouraged.

All materials must be received no later than **November 4, 2011**. Note that there are no hardcopy documents – this application process is completely online.

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A PROPOSAL FOR THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATION/SPENCER POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

Below are some of the questions that the Selection Committee uses in its discussions of applications:

- I. Is the application appropriate for this program?
 - a) Is the project an education research project?
 - b) Does the proposal meet the fellowship's goals and purpose?

- II. Does the proposal show an in-depth knowledge of relevant educational research in the field?
 - a) Does it review and critique relevant and important previous studies in the area of the proposal's research?
 - b) If the applicant might profit from access to particular individuals and resources, does the proposal mention who/what they are?

- III. Does the proposal specify an appropriate research design and method to collect and analyze the data?
 - a) Is the design and are the methods appropriate to the research question?
 - b) Will that design allow the researcher to find the answers to the research questions posed?
 - c) Is there clarity and specificity regarding the proposed analyses?
 - d) To the extent possible, does the proposal anticipate the shape of possible findings or the results of the inquiry, and indicate what conclusions could be drawn?

- IV. Does the proposal specify how the project will contribute to and extend educational knowledge?
 - a) What relevance does the project have to education?
 - b) Does the project address an important educational issue?
 - c) Will the project enhance educational knowledge in a critical way? Does it explain why this knowledge is worth pursuing or how will it benefit education?

- V. Can the project be completed within the time frame the fellowship allows?
 - a) One year full-time or two years half-time.

- VI. Is this a well-written proposal?
 - a) Is the proposal written for a general academic audience and not for specialists in one discipline/research area?
 - b) Is the organization and structure of the proposal clear? Does it define terms and procedures, etc.?

- VII. Does the proposal have a new way of thinking about or fresh approach to a persistent and important educational problem or issue?

Before submitting your proposal it can be very helpful to get feedback from colleagues you know and respect, people who can provide constructive criticism, and who are not your mentor or your immediate collaborator. It may be especially helpful to enlist a colleague whose focus is different from your own to ensure your proposal can be understood by readers from a different disciplinary background.

We also recommend reading "The Art of Writing Proposals," an article published by the Social Science Research Council which is available on their website at: http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/art_of_writing_proposals.page