



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

NSF 14-012

Dear Colleague Letter: Research in Disabilities Education (RDE) and Research on Gender in Science and Engineering (GSE) in the new Research on Education and Learning (REAL) Solicitation ([NSF 13-604](#))

November 5, 2013

The purpose of this Dear Colleague Letter is to alert the community to the continued opportunities to submit proposals to conduct research previously solicited by NSF's Research in Disabilities Education (RDE) and Research on Gender in Science and Engineering (GSE) programs. The solicitation containing information on these opportunities is the Research on Education and Learning (REAL) Solicitation ([NSF 13-604](#)) with a deadline for new proposals on January 10, 2014.

Three informational Webinars will be held in November and December specifically for individuals interested in submitting proposals on RDE and GSE topics. These will be held on the following dates (at the specified times):

Tuesday, November 12, 2013 at 2:00pm (EST)
Friday, November 22, 2013 at 2:00pm (EST)
Monday, December 2, 2013 at 2:00pm (EST)

To register for the Webinars, please send an e-mail to Nikki Godwin (ngodwin@nsf.gov) and additional information will be emailed to you. Webinar materials will be posted on the NSF web site after the conclusion of each webinar. Any questions may be directed to DRLREAL@nsf.gov.

The REAL solicitation ([NSF 13-604](#)) encourages the submission of proposals on RDE and GSE topics with special tracks under the Broadening Participation Research Area. These tracks support both fundamental and implementation research about issues underlying the differential participation of people with disabilities and women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and the workforce.

Proposals in the **Broadening Participation Research** area should investigate issues underlying the differential learning and participation of members of groups underrepresented in STEM fields. Underrepresented groups may include (but are not necessarily limited to) women and girls, people with disabilities, and/or underrepresented minorities (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Native Alaskans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders), and students from rural or lower socio-economic backgrounds. Such research is meant to catalyze the knowledge-building through research that informs the development of interventions to impact learning, persistence, and success in STEM for various groups under specific conditions and in specific contexts. Proposals should be based on a research design that derives from theory and incorporates appropriate and proven methodologies and strategies to: (1) formulate appropriate research questions; (2) implement the collection and analysis of data, including the design and implementation of interventions if they are integral to the research study; (3) interpret the resulting measures and findings generated by the study, and where appropriate (4) outline steps for successful dissemination or implementation efforts.

The **Research in Disabilities Education (RDE)** track supports fundamental and implementation research about learners (of all ages) with disabilities in STEM. This track encourages efforts to understand and address disability-based differences in STEM education and workforce participation. Fundamental research projects typically address areas such as stereotype threat, an individual's identity (e.g. STEM and disability identity), underlying attention and physical barriers that impact STEM learning, and the societal and organizational characteristics that influence learning and educational pathways. Implementation research projects typically address such areas as inclusive educational practices, universally designed STEM curricula, assistive technology, and supportive learning and/or educational environments. Researchers may consult the Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development ([NSF 13-126](#)), recently published by The Institute for Education Sciences and NSF, for guidelines on study design and the types of evidence to be produced by different types of education research studies. Projects must employ evidence-based educational exemplars, have a strong theoretical base, and be justified by relevant educational, disability, and social science research.

The **Research on Gender in Science and Engineering (GSE)** track supports efforts to understand and address gender-based differences in STEM education and workforce participation through education and implementation research that will lead to a larger and more diverse domestic STEM workforce. Typical projects will contribute to the knowledge base addressing gender-related differences in learning and in the educational experiences that affect student interest, performance, and choice of careers; and how pedagogical approaches and teaching styles, curriculum, student services, and institutional culture contribute to causing or closing gender gaps that persist in certain fields.

Proposals that focus on RDE and GSE topics should follow the guidelines for all REAL proposals as outlined in the solicitation (see solicitation section on Elements of REAL Proposals) and are eligible for all proposal types (Early-, Middle- and Later-Stage Research, Fostering Interdisciplinary Research in Education, Synthesis, and Conference and Workshop). Proposers are encouraged to consult the Common Guidelines for Education Research and Development ([NSF 13-126](#)) for information about education research projects.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan Ferrini-Mundy
Assistant Director
Directorate for Education and Human Resources

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