

# Call for applications: Spencer Foundation: Large Research Grants on Education Program

URL: [https://www.spencer.org/grant\\_types/large-research-grant](https://www.spencer.org/grant_types/large-research-grant)

Keywords: Education; Educational Research; Research Methods in Education

## **Funding amount and duration:**

Funding ranges from **USD 125 000 to USD 500 000**. Projects may run for up to **five years**.

## **Funder deadlines:**

- **Pre-proposal deadline: 24 February 2026**
- **Full proposal (by invitation): 23 June 2026**

## **UCT Internal Deadlines:**

- **UCT Intention to submit deadline:** Please complete [intention to submit](#) form an by **15 Jan 2026**
- **UCT eRA:** Approval via UCT's electronic Research Administration (eRA) system is **REQUIRED** prior to submission to the funder. Applicants should:
  - Submit an eRA Pre-Proposal Approval request with a draft budget to the Budget Reviewer by **27 Jan 2026**
  - [eRA Internal Approvals forms](#) should reach the Finance Approver by no later than **10 Feb 2026**
  - eRA Approval form and all supporting documents to reach RC&I via eRA by no later than **17 Feb 2026**

**Contact:** [internationalgrants@uct.ac.za](mailto:internationalgrants@uct.ac.za)

## About the Funding Opportunity

The [Large Research Grant programme](#) supports intellectually ambitious studies that advance understanding of educational processes and outcomes. Proposals can draw on different research traditions and methods, including qualitative, quantitative or mixed approaches. Spencer welcomes work that engages with pressing challenges in education across diverse global contexts.

Spencer foundations anticipate awarding grants with budgets across each of the following funding tiers –

1. \$125,000 to 250,000.
2. \$250,001 to \$375,000; and
3. \$375,001 to \$500,000.

This program is “field-initiated” in that proposal submissions are not in response to a specific request for a particular research topic, discipline, design, method, or location. Spencer Foundation’s goal for this program is to support rigorous, intellectually ambitious and technically sound research that is relevant to the most pressing questions and compelling opportunities in education.

## Eligibility Criteria

- Projects proposed may not be longer than 5 years in duration.
- Applicants can request funding amount- **max** USD 500,000 **and min** USD 125,000
- Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs must have an earned doctorate in an academic discipline or professional field, or appropriate experience in an education research-related profession. While graduate students may be part of the research team, they may not be named the PI or Co-PI on the proposal.
- Projects that are primarily comprised of activities other than education research (e.g., request for funding book writing, curriculum or technology development, technology purchases, philanthropic support for nonprofits or other service providers, program evaluations), or scholarships are not eligible.

## How to Apply

Applications begin with a preproposal, which Spencer uses to decide whether to invite a full proposal. Preproposals must be submitted online by the deadline date.

UCT applicants must begin the internal eRA approval process at the same time as they prepare the Spencer preproposal. These processes run in parallel, so please plan your timeline to meet both the internal and external deadlines.

### Preproposal Submission Steps

- **Step 1. Registration**  
PIs must register on the Spencer online portal <https://spencer.smartsimple.us/>  
If the PI is new to the system, they must first create a profile. Existing users can log in and update their profile.
- **Step 2. Complete Your Profile**  
Complete the *My Profile* page and upload a current CV (10-page limit).
- **Step 3. Create the Preproposal**  
From your Workbench, click Apply under “*Large Research Grants on Education*”. Drafts may be saved and edited until the deadline.

### UCT Internal Requirements and Deadlines

The internal approval process must run concurrently with the Spencer preproposal preparation. Please start your eRA steps as soon as you begin drafting your application.

Institutional approval via [eRA Internal Approvals forms](#) is required before submission to the funder.

	Deadline
PI to initiate an eRA Pre-Proposal Approval request and alert their faculty finance office of the budgetary support needed	Immediately
PI to submit an eRA Pre-Proposal Approval request with a draft budget to the Budget Reviewer step on eRA at least <b>4 weeks</b> before the funder deadline	27 Jan 2026
PI to submit an eRA Pre-Proposal Approval request to the Finance Approver step on eRA at least <b>2 weeks</b> before the funder deadline	10 Feb 2026
Approval form and all supporting documents to reach RC&I via eRA at least <b>1 week</b> before the funder deadline ( <i>if applicable, if funder requires institutional sign off</i> )	17 Feb 2026
Funder deadline	24 Feb 2026