

Call for applications: Research-Practice Partnerships: Collaborative Research for Educational Change

URL: https://www.spencer.org/grant_types/research-practice-partnerships

Keywords: Education; Educational Evaluation & Assessment; Higher Education, Students & Student Retention; Research Methods in Education; Schools Policy & Politics; Vocational & Technical Education & Training

Funding amount and duration of funding: Up to **\$400,000** and durations of up to **three years**.

Funder deadlines:

- **Pre-Proposal Deadline: 10 July 2026**
- **Full Proposal (By Invitation) Deadline: 28 Oct 2026**

UCT Internal Deadlines

- **UCT Intention to submit deadline:** Please complete an [intention-to-submit](#) form by **19 Jun 2026**
- **UCT eRA:** Approval via UCT's electronic Research Administration (eRA) system is **REQUIRED** prior to submission to the funder. Applicants should:
 - contact faculty finance/budget reviewer by no later than **12 Jun 2026**
 - [eRA Internal Approvals forms](#) should reach the Finance Approver by no later than **26 Jun 2026**

Contacts: internationalgrants@uct.ac.za

About the Funding Opportunity

The Spencer Foundation's RPP programme supports **collaborative, practice-engaged education research** that brings together researchers and practitioners (e.g. educators, policymakers, community organisations) to address pressing challenges in education.

Projects are expected to:

- Be **co-designed and implemented in partnership** with practice or policy stakeholders
- Address **real-world problems of practice or policy** in education
- Generate **actionable knowledge** that improves educational outcomes
- Build **longer-term, mutually beneficial partnerships** across sectors

Funding includes:

- Up to **USD 400,000**, including up to 15% [indirect cost charges](#).
- Project duration of up to **3 years**

Eligibility Criteria

Proposals to the Spencer Foundation Research Practice Partnerships (RPP) programme must:

- Focus on collaborative research partnerships between academic researchers and education practitioners and/or policymakers
- Address problems of practice or policy through jointly developed research and activities

Project team requirements:

- Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs should:
 - Hold a doctoral qualification, *or*
 - Demonstrate equivalent professional experience relevant to the partnership
- Where a practitioner/policy partner does not hold a doctorate, they must demonstrate appropriate professional expertise and leadership experience
- Graduate students may participate in the project team but may not serve as PI or Co-PI

Application Process

How to apply

Applicants must ensure all proposals go through UCT's electronic Research Administration ([eRA](#)) system for institutional approval **before** submission to the Spencer Foundation.

Preproposal (Mandatory): The application process begins with submitting a preproposal via the Spencer Foundation online portal, please visit <https://spencer.smartsimple.us/>

The preproposal includes:

- A narrative (max. 1,350 words)
- A draft budget (max. 2 pages)
- References (max. 2 pages)

Only applicants who are successful at this stage will be invited to submit a **full proposal**.

UCT Internal deadlines and requirements

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| PI to initiate an eRA Proposal Approval request and alert their faculty finance office of the budgetary support needed | Immediately |
| PI to submit an eRA Proposal Approval request with a draft budget to the Budget Reviewer step on eRA at least 4 weeks before the funder deadline | 12 Jun 2026 |
| PI to submit an eRA Proposal Approval request to the Finance Approver step on eRA at least 2 weeks before the funder deadline | 26 Jun 2026 |
| Approval form and all supporting documents to reach RC&I via eRA at least 1 week before the funder deadline (<i>if applicable, if funder requires institutional sign off</i>) | 03 Jul 2026 |
| PI to submit the application on the funder portal by the funder deadline | 10 Jul 2026 |