CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

International accounting education standards

About ACCA

ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) is the global body for professional accountants. We aim to offer business-relevant, first-choice qualifications to people of application, ability and ambition around the world who seek a rewarding career in accountancy, finance and management.

Founded in 1904, ACCA has consistently held unique core values: opportunity, diversity, innovation, integrity and accountability. We believe that accountants bring value to economies at all stages of their development. We seek to develop capacity in the profession and encourage the adoption of global standards. Our values are aligned to the needs of employers in all sectors and we ensure that, through our qualifications, we prepare accountants for business. We seek to open up the profession to people of all backgrounds and remove artificial barriers, developing our qualifications and their delivery to meet the diverse needs of trainee professionals and their employers.

We support our 140,000 members and 404,000 students in 170 countries, helping them to develop successful careers in accounting and business, based on the skills required by employers. We work through a network of 83 offices and centres and more than 8,000 Approved Employers worldwide, who provide high standards of employee learning and development. Through our public interest remit, we promote appropriate regulation of accounting and conduct relevant research to ensure accountancy continues to grow in reputation and influence.

ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) and the International Association for Accounting Education and Research (IAAER) are pleased to invite research proposals to support the work of IFAC's International Accounting Education Standards Board (IAESB).

The program supports academic research directed at informing the IAESB's standard setting activities. Funded projects will be showcased at events involving representatives from the IAESB as well as researchers specializing in the area of accounting education and assessment.

ACCA, IAESB, and IAAER plan to publish a briefing report summarising the primary research findings of the program. Research teams may publish an academic report of their individual findings in the publication of their choice.

Funding for this program is provided by ACCA.

The deadline for submission of proposals is 1 September 2010.

Program objective

The call promotes and supports research directed at developing theory and evidence to inform the IAESB's decision-making process.

Proposals may address any of the following seven topics, or some combination of them.

There is special interest in the first topic; if no acceptable proposal is received in that area, no more than three grants will be awarded.

E-ASSESSMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

Assessment is crucial in ensuring the competence of practicing accountants. For both conceptual and practical reasons there is a trend toward electronic or computer-based assessments (e-assessment). The use of multiple-choice style questions is well established in e-assessment, and new question types are now being explored which provide a more valid and realistic assessment of competency than has previously been possible for both computer-based and paper-based assessments. Research in this area should address best practices for e-assessment. Suggestions for potential areas for research include:

- Developing innovative question types, including competency-based assessments in forms not possible for paper-based assessment.

- The role of extended text-based questions in e-assessment and approaches to marking.

- The impact of students' ICT literacy on e-assessment performance in different parts of the world.

The focus of the research proposals should be on e-assessment in professional education settings, and can include professions other than accounting. It should include e-assessment of broad competences, not simply assessment of knowledge. It must include summative assessment but may also include formative assessment. The primary interest is on assessment for entry into professional careers, but proposal topics may also include assessment for continuing professional development.

MODELS OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Continuing professional development should vary across the different specialised roles of professional accountants and their experience and level within an organization. With a focus on roles within the audit team, but also including other professional accounting roles, identify how CPD currently differs across roles and levels. Develop a framework for CPD that encompasses the best practices for CPD for various roles and levels.

CONVERGENCE OF ACCOUNTING EDUCATION STANDARDS

IFAC charges its standard-setting boards to achieve global convergence via adherence to its standards. In the context of the IAESB, what does convergence mean? How can convergence be attained? How can convergence be measured? What are the costs and benefits of convergence?

MODELS OF ACCOUNTING EDUCATION

Methods, processes, and structure of education in general and accounting education in particular vary from country to country. Accounting education standards are intended to apply across the spectrum of educational models. Research into models of accounting education will help assess the impacts of accounting education standards across the different models. The research should identify the different models, including the characteristics or variables on which they differ. From the information on the models, the project can develop a taxonomy to allow classification of models in a way that helps identify the impact of accounting education standards, including their adoption and implementation by professional accounting associations or member bodies.

COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING EDUCATION STANDARDS (IESS)

IFAC collects compliance data on adherence to the IESs. Using these data, develop and test a model that explains compliance and noncompliance with IESs. Determine those characteristics of an IFAC member body's environment and particular IES provisions that are the primary drivers of compliance and noncompliance.

QUALITY CONTROL OF THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS

When accounting education and development is offered by third-party providers, quality control over the process is essential. The research project should identify, compare, and classify quality control systems used to monitor such third-party providers. It should look at systems within the accounting profession but also explore such systems used in other professions.

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOUNTING TECHNICIANS

Accounting technicians play an important role in many organisations. The IAESB has determined that international accounting education standards should apply to accounting technicians. To help develop relevant standards for accounting technicians, research should identify and compare various models for developing accounting technicians. It should focus on the competences required for roles served by accounting technicians and how those relate to other professional accounting roles.

Program funding

Up to four research grants of GB£16,000 equivalent, funded by ACCA, will be awarded under the program. The grants will be paid in three installments and may be applied to cover travel costs associated with attending program events and/or direct costs associated with the research.

Proposals are welcome from research teams domiciled anywhere in the world. Additionally, proposals are encouraged from research teams whose members are from different regions of the world.

All research approaches and paradigms are welcome. Funding decisions will be based on the potential of the research to provide valuable input to the IAESB.

Members of the Proposal Review Committee will review proposals and make preliminary recommendations to the Program Advisory Committee. Final funding decisions will be made by the Program Advisory Committee. The Program Advisory Committee will initially select a set of finalists, who may be asked to submit revised proposals for final consideration.

Project deliverables

Prior to **15 January 2011**, contracts will be signed by research teams. Each contract will specify interim milestones, deliverables, and expected delivery dates. Key dates to be agreed to in the contract include:

- **March 2011**

  Research designs and any preliminary results will be presented at a by-invitation ACCA/IAAER mini-conference at a place and time to be determined, most likely scheduled around the IAESB's March meeting. Teams will be required to submit interim results, an executive summary of interim results, and presentation slides to the Program Coordinator two weeks prior to the conference. The first grant installment of GB£5,000 will be dispersed upon completion of the first research phase, including timely submission of required deliverables and presentation at the mini-conference. The Program Advisory Committee will supply each team with feedback and recommendations within 30 days of the conference.

- **September/October 2011**

  Research teams will present interim research findings at a place and time to be determined, most likely scheduled around the IAESB's October meeting. Teams will be required to submit interim results, an executive summary of interim results, presentation slides, and a summary of how the team is responding to the recommendations of the Program Advisory Committee to the Program Coordinator two weeks prior to the meeting. Adequately addressing recommendations of the Program Advisory Committee is a pre-requisite for presentation. The second grant installment of GB£5,000 will be dispersed upon completion of the second research phase, including timely submission of required deliverables and presentation at the meeting. The Program Advisory Committee will supply each team with feedback and recommendations within 30 days of the meeting.

- **February/March 2012**

  Final results will be presented to the IAESB at its meeting in February or March 2012. The final deliverables will focus on highlighting the significance of the findings to standard setters. Teams will be required to submit final results, an executive summary of the final results, presentation slides, and a summary of how the team responded to the recommendations of the Program Advisory Committee to the Program Coordinator two weeks prior to the final presentation. Adequately addressing recommendations of the Program Advisory Committee is a pre-requisite for presentation. The third grant installment of GB£6,000 will be dispersed upon completion of the final research phase, including timely submission of required deliverables and presentation at the IAESB meeting.

Research proposal format

Research proposals are due **1 September 2010**.

Proposals should be concise, not exceeding 10 pages (at 1.5-line spacing and 12-point font). All proposals should be in English.

Proposals should contain the following information.

*   Clear and concise definitions and description of the:
    –   research question
    –   research objectives
    –   research method to be employed.

*   Description of the proposed research activities.

*   References to leading studies on the topic (including a reference list not exceeding two pages).

*   Indication of how the proposed research will inform the IAESB decision process in one of the seven areas noted on page 3.

Each proposal should additionally:

*   designate a principal investigator who will have primary contractual responsibility for the research project

*   include a curriculum vitae for each member of the research team.

All proposals are to be submitted electronically to the program co-ordinator, at glsundem@uw.edu

Proposal text and supporting materials should be in a single electronic file (either MS Word or PDF).

Questions about the program or proposal process should be directed to Gary Sundem at glsundem@uw.edu

By **15 October 2010** the Program Advisory Committee will select a set of finalists, some of which may be asked to submit revised proposals. The revised proposals will be submitted to the Program Advisory Committee by **15 November 2010.**

Grant winners will be announced no later than **15 December 2010.**

Program Advisory Committee

Members of the Program Advisory Committee include:

IAESB
*   Adrian Pulham, Education and Training Director, CIPFA
*   Kim Langfield-Smith, Deputy Dean (Research), Monash University
*   Kazuo Hiramatsu, Kwansei Gakuin University
*   David McPeak, Technical Manager, IFAC

IAAER
*   Donna L. Street, President
*   Gary L. Sundem, VP Education

ACCA
*   Aude Leonetti, Director of Education, ACCA
*   Barry Cooper, Chairman of ACCA Research Committee, Professor of Accounting, Deakin University, Melbourne
*   Caroline Oades, Head of Research, ACCA

Contact

All proposals, and questions about the program or proposal processes, should be directed to the program co-ordinator, Gary Sundem.

glsundem@uw.edu