

Data-Driven Discovery (DDD) Investigator Competition
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
February 21, 2014

Q: Where is the competition web site?

The web site is <http://www.moore.org/DDDInvestigator>

Q: How often will this FAQ be updated?

Every few days until the pre-application closing date of Monday February 24, 2014 5 PM Pacific.

Q: What is the purpose of the pre-application process?

The goal of the foundation is to identify innovators in data-intensive science. Please use your best judgment to decide whether you are eligible to apply. If you think you will be competitive, please apply. If our reviewers agree, you will be invited to submit a full application.

Q: Is there a limit on the number of pre-applications per institution? Do pre-applications require institutional sign-off?

No. There is no institutional limit and institutional sign-off is not required. Moore encourages pre-applications from all qualified investigators.

Q: Will the reviews be made available to pre-applicants after decisions are made?

No. The foundation will not share reviews with applicants and there will not be any feedback given as to why a particular decision was made.

Q: Where do I put references?

References may be entered in three distinct places on the pre-application materials subject to the page limits.

1. Supporting references can be cited in-line as part of the accomplishments and research directions to provide context.
2. Naturally, your NSF-style bio-sketch has section(s) for you to cite your own work.
3. The (up to) five *Influential Works* on the pre-application web form are for you to reference work that you think has helped define the field of data science. This may or may not be your own work. Taken collectively, across all the DDD IC pre-applications, these works will give the foundation a snapshot of data intensive science. Members of the DDD staff intend to write a review paper that summarizes these findings, and information will only be used in an aggregate form. All applicants will be notified when the paper is published in an open-access journal, likely in the second half of 2015 depending on editorial cycles.

These three lists may overlap somewhat.

Q: Are figures allowed?

Yes, but they must fit in the two page limit and any text in the figures must be legible.

Q: I am on the borderline between the Early Career and Experienced categories, what should I choose?

Please use your best judgment, we are primarily interested in good ideas and we will not be counting days on the six-year window. There are no quotas for each investigator category.

Q: Why does the solicitation exclude collection of new data?

A: The field of data-driven discovery is huge and resources are limited. Given the scale of current challenges in utilizing what has already been collected, the foundation determined that for these investigator awards the best approach is to stimulate research that leverages existing data sets to develop new methodologies and make discoveries in the natural sciences. These innovations will certainly help those that are seeking new data types and new methods of data acquisition, however these investigator awards will not directly cover data collection activities.

Q: What do you mean by “data science,” “data-intensive science.” or “data-driven science”?

The foundation often uses these terms interchangeably. In essence we are referring to the people and practices involved in leveraging the modern scale of massive, highly complex and fast moving data to make discoveries and learn about the world. Often this work is multidisciplinary, and the people described as “pi-shaped” to indicate that the effort involved is at the confluence of multiple skills and expertise. For the purposes of the DDD Initiative at Moore, we are mostly interested at the confluence of the natural sciences with statistics and computer science to define these terms.

Q: I am working on X, is that within scope of the competition?

We will not be providing advice on whether your particular area of research falls within scope during this open competition. We can emphasize that Moore has a clear mandate to fund basic research in the natural sciences. The Data-Driven Discovery Initiative is interested in the intersection of these natural science domains with computer science and statistics/applied mathematics. This confluence of skills is sometimes referred to as Data Science/Data-Intensive Science, Data-Enabled Science or Data-Driven Science. If you assess that your work falls within these domains of interest, please submit a pre-application.

Q: Does the “applicant’s research group” include collaborators?

These awards are primarily intended for individual investigators to advance his/her work and the selection process will focus on the individual’s strengths and proposed research directions. More information and budget guidelines will be shared with those invited to submit a full application.

Q: May we list multiple investigators?

No. This is an individual investigator competition.

Q: Is the competition open to for-profit enterprises?

No. Pre-applications will only be accepted from investigators at PhD-granting institutions or non-profit private research institutions in the US.

Q: Are researchers working at federal research laboratories or FFRDC’s eligible for the competition?

No. However, those with joint-appointments and PI status at universities or private research labs are welcome to apply.

Q: Are current Moore Foundation grantees eligible?

Current and past grantees of the foundation are welcome to apply.

Q: Will you accept pre-applications from PhD students intending to start postdoctoral fellowships in Fall 2014?

This competition is not for graduate students or post-docs, it is for investigators that have PI status at eligible institutions before the pre-application deadline of February 24, 2014.

Q: Why is the program limited only to US PhD-granting and private research institutions?

Part of the overarching strategy of the DDD initiative is shifting culture in academia within the United States to accept and promote data scientists for natural science discoveries. We plan to coordinate with other research funders, both in the US and internationally, to help catalyze similar programs tailored to their local conditions.

Q: What is the indirect cost policy?

The award amount would include all costs and the limit for indirect costs is 12.5% as described at

<http://www.moore.org/docs/default-source/Grantee-Resources/indirect-cost-policy.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Q: What is an NSF-style bio-sketch?

Please see section 2.f(i) on Biographical Sketch(es) in the NSF grant proposal guide at http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/pappguide/nsf13001/gpg_2.jsp#IIC2fi

An example is at

<http://www.moore.org/docs/default-source/Grantee-Resources/sample-nsf-style-bio-sketch.pdf>