

Call for SDRME Research Review/Synthesis Papers Proposals * August 2021

The Society of Directors of Research in Medical Education (SDRME) is issuing a call for research review paper proposals. Specifically, SDRME is interested in supporting the writing of review/synthesis papers that make a substantial contribution to advancing **practice, theory, or research in medical education**. We welcome proposals that use a variety of methods for identifying and synthesizing relevant published research, including (but not limited to) narrative, thematic, critical, realist, scoping, and systematic reviews. Papers are expected to be completed within two years from the time grant monies are received. The grant will award **up to \$5000** in total to the primary author: \$2500 when the project begins and \$2500 following dissemination of the paper in the public domain and a presentation at the annual SDRME meeting (see details below). We will pay expenses up to \$1000 for travel to attend the SDRME meeting to make this presentation, in addition to the grant award. **Proposals are due at 11:59pm Pacific Time on September 10, 2021.**

Eligibility:

- The first author (principal investigator) must be a current member of the faculty at an accredited allopathic or osteopathic medical school or residency program in the USA or Canada, or a member of SDRME. *We make no exceptions for eligibility requirements.*
- An individual may be first author on only one application, but may be a collaborator/co-investigator on multiple applications.
- The first author does not need to be a member of SDRME (except for non-accredited institutions and institutions outside USA and Canada).

Proposal and Submission Guidelines

1. Proposal

- a. Length: No more than **500 words and 2 pages**. Title, investigators, budget justification, and references do not count in word limit (but do count in page limit). One table or figure may be included, but it counts in the 2-page limit.
- b. Structure: all proposals should have the following information, in order:
 - 1) Title, investigators, and primary investigator (first author) contact information
 - 2) Background
 - 3) Importance/impact of the topic to medical education practice, theory or research.
 - 4) Methods to be used to complete the review and your rationale for selecting that approach (e.g., meta-analysis, critical synthesis, or thematic review; literature sources to be searched; inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.)
 - 5) Importance/Impact of review on the practice of medical education.
 - 6) Feasibility
 - 7) Budget justification: Brief narrative and/or tabular description of how the award funds (\$3000-5000) will be spent to support this project. Include a brief statement indicating how any shortfall (i.e., an award less than the proposed budget) will be met (e.g., through a local grant or unremunerated effort). *Award decisions are based only on merit; the amount of funding requested will have no impact on award decisions.*
 - 8) References

c. Formatting: Single-spaced, minimum 0.5-inch margins and 10-point font, formatted to fit on 2 pages. Maximum 1 table or figure (counts in page limit). Title, budget justification, and references also count towards the page limit. Save the document in **PDF format**, named with the **first author's last name** (example: "Cook,DA.SDRME2020 proposal").

d. A model proposal can be found at <http://www.sdrme.org/scholarship.asp>.

2. Curriculum vitae: The principal investigator and each co-investigator must submit a **two page abbreviated CV**. The CV may include (within the 2-page limit) a brief narrative description of that author's experience conducting this type of review/synthesis. **All CV's must be merged into a single document**, and each author's CV should start on a **new page**. The CV document can be merged with the proposal into a single document (proposal first, then CVs), or submitted as a separate document (if separate, save as **PDF** and use name similar to application: "Cook,DA.SDRME CVs").

3. The **FIRST AUTHOR** should submit the proposal and CV's **via e-mail (as an attachment)** to: David A. Cook, MD, MHPE, Chair SDRME Invited Review Committee (cook.david33@mayo.edu). The first author is the corresponding author, and the submission email should come directly from the first author unless local policies require that a grants specialist submit the application on behalf of the team.

Submissions that do not conform to guidelines may not be reviewed. Late submissions will not be accepted. A cover letter is **not** required.

Evaluation of Proposals and Selection of Awards

The SDRME Invited Review/Synthesis Committee is composed of 3 to 5 members of SDRME. Committee members use the following criteria to evaluate proposals:

1. **Importance:** Importance of the topic to practice of medical education, including how this builds on prior work in the field
2. **Methods:** Soundness of the proposed methodology
3. **Impact:** Potential impact of the review/synthesis on medical education
4. **Feasibility:** Potential for completion in 1-2 years, including the collective expertise of the investigator team.

Applicants will be notified of decisions in early November.

Requirements after award

1. **Annual written update:** During the funding period, recipients will be required to provide an annual written update on progress.
2. **Present at annual SDRME meeting:** The primary investigator will attend the annual SDRME meeting (typically held in June or July) once to provide an update and highlight results. SDRME will pay expenses up to \$1000 for travel to attend this meeting, in addition to the grant award. Investigators are encouraged to share preliminary (rather than final) findings and receive feedback and suggestions from SDRME members to incorporate into the final manuscript. Because we value the social interaction with presenters before and after the presentation itself, we require that the presenter attend in

person (i.e., "virtual" presentations do not fulfill this requirement unless the meeting itself is virtual).

3. **Acknowledge funding:** All manuscript(s) deriving from the review must acknowledge the Society of Directors of Research in Medical Education as a source of support.
4. **Dissemination in the public domain:** We expect the final paper to be made available in the public domain. Typically this involves publication in a **peer-reviewed journal**, but posting in a **permanent open-access online repository** is an acceptable alternative. We encourage the first author to send a (draft) copy of the manuscript to the Committee Chair (David Cook) upon completion or initial submission, to make sure it will fulfill requirements upon public dissemination. Author(s) *must* submit the **final manuscript** to the Committee Chair for definitive approval; this manuscript will be kept confidential within the SDRME Executive Committee. The **requirement of Dissemination will be met** upon a) receipt of the final manuscript and either b) confirmation of acceptance to a peer-reviewed journal, or c) confirmation of posting in an online repository. A copy/link to the *published* product(s) will appear on the SDRME website.

Minor deviations from planned review methods are allowed, but important changes in the scope or methods should be discussed with the Committee Chair (David Cook) before they are pursued. Major changes may invalidate the award, and preclude the second disbursement of funds.

Disbursement of award

The first half of the award will be disbursed at the time of selection. The second half will be disbursed upon successful completion of requirements 1-4 above.

Answers to frequently asked questions:

- **Is topic X of particular interest?** Answer: The SDRME does not have a specific agenda of priority research topics, and thus we cannot comment in advance on the priority of specific topics. During the review process, we prioritize topics that will have a substantial and broad impact on the field. If a given topic represents a pressing problem for the education of health professionals, then that would be viewed favorably.
- **Is there a preference given to first authors with a more robust publication history?** Answer: One of the review criteria is "feasibility." To the extent that experience will enhance the likelihood of success, we do consider experience as an important factor in our decisions. However, we do not look only at the first author, but rather at the entire review team. For example, if the first author has limited experience, but another core member of the team has experience with systematic reviews, the latter's experience would be viewed favorably (provided there is assurance that the experienced author will play an active role in the project).
- **Does the award cover indirect costs?** Answer: No. The award is a fixed amount. We make no allowance for indirect costs or other grant processing fees.
- **My proposal was not funded last year. Can I revise and resubmit this year?** Yes.
- **Can I see examples of previously funded and published SDRME review papers?** Yes; go to <http://sdrme.org/scholarship.asp>.
- **May I forward this announcement on to other colleagues?** Yes.
- **Should the CV's be a separate document?** You may combine the proposal and the CV's into a single document, or you may have 2 documents (1 for the proposal, the other for all of the CV's merged). In either case, each author's CV should start on a new page.

- **Can faculty from a school of nursing or pharmacy apply?** Answer: Unfortunately, no (not as the first author / primary investigator). SDRME is a group of representatives from LCME-accredited medical schools. We appreciate the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, and know that health professionals can learn much from one another. However, we have only limited funds, and we feel that we need to focus our funding efforts toward those research questions that directly influence the training of physicians. Anyone may participate as a collaborator.
- **Can we "share" the first author / principal investigator role among two investigators?** Answer: No. The first author is always the corresponding author, and will be the person named on the award check. All communications will occur directly with the first author. Only the first author will be listed as the recipient on SDRME records and website. The investigator team can do whatever they feel is appropriate in giving credit and listing the application and the award on, for example, their own curriculum vitae.
- **Can an ineligible person (e.g., resident, student, non-faculty researcher, or non-SDRME international first author) be the first author as long as an eligible person is the "senior" author?** Answer: No. The first author is the corresponding author, and must be eligible as described above.
- **I initially planned to do a [systematic / scoping / realist / narrative] review, but after getting into the literature we plan to change our review approach. Can I do this?** Answer: Maybe, but proposed changes should first be discussed with the Invited Review Committee Chair. Award decisions are made based on the project as described in the application; other approaches might have been viewed less favorably. As such, any changes beyond "minor" may invalidate the award and preclude the second disbursement of funds.
- **How detailed does the budget justification need to be?** Answer: The budget justification can be very brief (see examples posted online). We just need to know how you will spend the award funds.
- **If I request less than the maximum amount, will that improve my chances of getting a (smaller) award?** Answer: No. Award decisions are based only on the merits of the proposal. We encourage investigators to apply for the maximum award amount (\$4000) if warranted by anticipated expenses.
- **What if my budget exceeds the award amount? (or) What if the award is for less than the amount I requested?** Answer: We realize that the award will usually fall short of covering all the costs incurred in conducting a high-quality literature review. You will need to plan for this as you prepare the proposal, and include a brief note explaining how any shortfall will be met.
- **What are approved or unapproved budget expenses?** Answer: We place no restrictions on how funds are spent. All investigators will be responsible to adhere to local institutional policies on the expenditure of grant funds.
- **Can I deliver my presentation virtually (e.g., using Zoom or other webinar app)?** No, unless the SDRME meeting itself is virtual (as it was in summer 2021).

Tips for success

- Be sure to follow instructions for proposal format (2 pages, 500 words). Merge all CV's into a single document. Each CV should start a new page.
- Clearly indicate how your review will meet all four evaluation criteria (see above).
- Indicate what reviews or summaries have already been published on this topic, and how your review will improve or build upon these.

- In the Methods, explain (among other things) how you will identify relevant primary studies, and how you will synthesize/integrate the information learned from these studies. (Simply citing another source, e.g. published guidelines, will rarely suffice.)
- Highlight the team's collective expertise in conducting reviews (hint: the CV *narrative* is a good place to elaborate on this).
- Be realistic in what you can accomplish, and if possible present evidence that the project will be feasible in a reasonable length of time.
- Avoid unsupported platitudes such as "We are confident this review can be completed within 12 months" or "This review will be of great importance to medical education." (These are fine if they are supported by specific evidence/information.)
- Teams are nearly always more successful than single investigators (both in the grant application, and in the conduct of the review).
- If planning a systematic review (note: reviews do **not** need to be "systematic"), you might consider incorporating the suggestions from the following resources:
 - Cook DA, West CP. Conducting systematic reviews in medical education: a stepwise approach. *Medical Education* 2012; 46:943–952.
 - Hammick M, Dornan T, Steinert Y. Conducting a best evidence systematic review. Part 1: From idea to data coding. BEME Guide No. 13. *Medical Teacher* 2010; 32:3-15.
- The following resource contains suggestions relevant to literature reviews of **any type**:
 - Cook DA. Tips for a great review article: crossing methodological boundaries. *Medical Education* 2016;50:384-7.