

LETTERS OF INTENT DUE 8/27/2012 | FINAL APPLICATIONS DUE: 10/1/2012



DIGITAL MEDIA+LEARNING

badge development research competition

A DIGITAL MEDIA AND LEARNING RESEARCH COMPETITION ON BADGING AND BADGE SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

In March 2012, the Digital Media and Learning Competition on Badges for Lifelong Learning (supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) awarded 30 development grants to support the creation of digital badges and badge systems that contribute to, identify, recognize, measure, and account for new skills, competencies, knowledge, and achievements for 21st century learners wherever and whenever learning takes place.

We seek research proposals that support and inform the design, development, and deployment of the digital badges and badge systems in any of these categories:

- 1) The Digital Media and Learning [Badges for Lifelong Learning](#) general category, which supported the development of badges and badge systems across a diverse range of content, institutions, and approaches.
- 2) Project Mastery awards focusing on the efficacy of badging systems for learning at [Gates Foundation supported Project Mastery sites](#) ([School District of Philadelphia](#), [Adams County School District 50](#), [Asia Society](#)). Project Mastery projects promote learning that is mastery based and Common Core aligned. The aim is to support new learning and knowledge, real-world outcomes like jobs, credit for new skills and achievements, and whole new ways to level up in their life and work.
- 3) Teacher Mastery badge projects that track and promote feedback regarding the competencies, skills programs and subjects over which teachers acquire expertise. These include systems for recognizing and rewarding some of the capacities, skills and content needed to effectively teach math, literacy, or digital literacy skills and/or to effectively teach to the Common Core State Standards.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Badge Development Research Competition seeks empirical and theoretical research focusing on one or more of the following questions:

- How have ranking, badging, reputations and achievement systems been used in games, clubs, competitions, and other forms of interest-driven activities? What design principles and guidelines might we glean from past and existing cases that can inform the development of badges for learning?
- What role have accreditation and certificates played inside and outside of formal degree programs, including areas such as core curriculum, work skills training, arts, crafts, and other trades? More specifically, how might badging help to address some of the challenges currently facing teacher assessment and credentialing?

- How have learning institutions, groups, and individuals produced, utilized, and exploited various credentialing and reputation systems? How has such credentialing been changing with the shifts to a digital and networked society?
- How have learning institutions, groups, and individuals produced, utilized, and exploited various credentialing and reputation systems? How has such credentialing been changing with the shifts to a digital and networked society?
- In what ways is mastery assessed? Are learners given productive opportunities to demonstrate mastery (in their application, in producing and not solely consuming knowledge, and in their participating in learning and knowledge production)?
- How do badge creators define mastery? To what degrees are the competencies represented by the badging system and individual badges clear to the learners?
- In what ways is mastery assessed? Are learners given productive opportunities to demonstrate mastery (in their application, in producing and not solely consuming knowledge, and in their participating in learning and knowledge production)?
- How do badging systems conceptualize and operationalize learning pathways/trajectories? Do badging systems offer opportunities for learning connections and interactions with others, as well as for feedback? For leveling up along the learning trajectory? How or to what extent are novice to expert trajectories made available?
- How is the badging system conceiving and operationalizing validation or legitimacy of the learning taking place, and so too of the badges being issued?

Proposed projects would need to consider these questions in ways that directly address the needs and concerns of the DML Badge Competition winners. The nature of the relationship to the Badge Development Competition can take a variety of forms, including:

- Collaborative design research with Badge Competition winners, where researchers would be involved in the prototyping, testing, and iteration of badge or badge platform development. Proposals of this nature would need to include a letter of support from the collaborating project or projects.
- Research with using the design, development, and deployment process of one or more of the Badge Competition winners, to examine the general effectiveness of badges and badging systems to motivate, recognize, and assess learning. This can include analysis of designs, or conducting interview or survey work with competition winners. Proposals of this nature would need to include a letter of support from the collaborating project or projects.
- Research that studies or synthesizes research on existing or historical badging, reputation, assessment, or credentialing system in ways that can inform the design, development, and deployment of the Digital Media and Learning Competition winners. This can include developing theoretical insights, design principles, or conceptual frameworks.

View the winning projects in the [Badges for Lifelong Learning Competition](#) and [Teacher Mastery and Feedback Competition](#).

AWARDS RANGING BETWEEN \$75,000 AND \$250,000 WILL BE MADE.

EXPECTATIONS

- Proposals must include an account of how your research plans to focus on, illuminate, or give context to the Badge Competition grantees (collectively or by looking at one or more of the projects) or define the larger ecosystem and the role of the Digital Media and Learning Competition within that ecosystem.
- Proposals choosing to focus on Project Mastery or Teacher Mastery Badge projects should pay particular attention to how the Common Core are integrated and assessed within the respective badging systems.
- Proposals choosing to focus on Project Mastery projects will be expected to collaborate and coordinate with related research efforts led by RAND. Access to the latter will be arranged for relevant qualifying proposals.
- Awarded funds may be used for salary replacement, for travel in support of data collection, for modest graduate research assistance in support of the project (no more than one-third of final budget), or for modest technological support for the project.
- Proposals should include in their budgets any incentives for research subjects, including Digital Media and Learning Badge Competition winners, to participate in the research design and/or research.
- Awarded research projects may have to complete IRB review, and if so should include in their budgets any associated costs.
- The grantee will also be responsible for organizing a public forum to disseminate the findings of the research.
- The grantee is required to produce one publication, which could be a book, a MacArthur Foundation Digital Media and Learning Report, literature review, or white paper. Support for both the public forum and activities resulting in publication are to be included in the grant budget.
- Research award winners are expected to attend two meetings:
 1. Digital Media and Learning Competition workshop to be held for awardees at UC Irvine on January 24-25, 2013;
 2. The Digital Media and Learning Conference in Chicago, March 14-16, 2013. Registration and travel costs for both are to be included in the awarded budgets. Participation at the events is a requirement of the award.

APPLICATION

The application process is two stage, requiring an initial submission of a **Letter of Intent** and, if invited, a **Final Application** that will be submitted for judging.

Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent will be used to determine whether your proposed research project meets the parameters of the call. Please include an abstract of your proposal (250 word limit) briefly explaining your choice of potential research partners (where relevant) to help us get a sense of the scope and goals of your project. If determined that your proposed research is in line with the CFP and goals of the Badge Development Research Competition, the DML Competition Team will contact your requested research partner on your behalf (where

relevant). Please do not attempt to contact potential research partners on your own. Each research partner has the discretion to determine which projects they want to work with. If your project is chosen as a partner or seeks funding for research on badging and badge development systems more generally, you will be contacted to follow up and provide additional information and to complete a final application. Please note that a letter of support from your research partner (where relevant) is a requirement of the final application.

Final Application

If your Letter of Intent is accepted, you will be invited to submit a Final Application which must include:

- Proposal outline, including rationale and work plan, no more than 1500 words
- Public forum outline, no more than 250 words
- Budget and budget narrative for proposal
- Budget and budget narrative for public forum
- Letter of support from your prospective DML Competition grantee research partner (if applicable)

DEADLINE

Letters of Intent are now being accepted. They should be submitted in FASTAPPS (<http://fastapps.dmlcompetition.net/>) by 5:00 PM PDT ON AUGUST 27, 2012 for priority consideration. While Letters of Intent will continue to be accepted after the priority deadline on a rolling basis, we encourage you to submit as early as possible to allow ample time to connect with potential research partners. We can not guarantee that those applicants that submit after the August 27th priority deadline will have sufficient time to connect with and secure letters of support from potential research partners.

Research applications that seek funding to pursue more theoretical projects on badging will not be required to partner with a Badge Competition project, and will not require a letter of support.

After completing the Letter of Intent, applicants will receive an email with a link to the Final Application.

All Final Applications are to be completed at FASTAPPS by 5:00PM PDT ON OCTOBER 1, 2012. *Please note: you can save your application by clicking the "submit" button at the bottom of the application form. All applications can be saved and edited up until the deadline at 5:00PM on October 1, 2012. No proposals will be reviewed before this time.*

This Research Competition on Badging and Badge System Development is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It is part of the larger HASTAC Competition on Digital Media and Learning supported by grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as well as from the Gates Foundation to the University of California, in collaboration with Duke University and the Mozilla Foundation. The University of California Humanities Research Institute and Duke University's John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute are the principal administering bodies of the DML Competition in behalf of HASTAC.