



## Solicitation for New Research Projects Beginning in January 2026

Announcement: December 15th, 2025

**Proposal Submittal Deadline: February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

Confidential: For use by CAPER members only

## I. Overview

This research solicitation is intended for members of CAPER to form collaborative teams and submit research proposals that are consistent with the mission for CAPER which is to advance, develop and promote research related to the reliable and efficient management of the power grid, including modeling and analysis techniques for generation, transmission and distribution planning and operation with and without presence of renewable energy resources. Project proposals are expected to align with the stated five research theme areas: Power Delivery Infrastructure and Systems, Power Utilization and Energy Efficiency, Power Generation, Storage and Integration, Data Management, Analytics and Security and Energy Policy, Markets and Economics. Submitted proposals shall follow the guidelines provided in this solicitation. Any questions related to the project proposals can be directed to the Center Director or any one of the Steering Committee members noted below:

Center Director: Dr. Robert Cox – UNC Charlotte ([robert.cox@charlotte.edu](mailto:robert.cox@charlotte.edu))

Center Co-Director: Dr. Badrul Chowdhury – UNC Charlotte ([bchowdhury@charlotte.edu](mailto:bchowdhury@charlotte.edu))

Center Co-Director: Dr. Ning Lu – NC State University ([nlu2@ncsu.edu](mailto:nlu2@ncsu.edu))

Center Co-Director: Dr. Ramtin Hadidi – Clemson University ([rhadidi@clemson.edu](mailto:rhadidi@clemson.edu))

Center Steering Committee Chair: Andrew Clarke – Duke Energy ([andrew.clarke@duke-energy.com](mailto:andrew.clarke@duke-energy.com))

You may also contact officers of the Industry Advisory Board noted below:

IAB Chair: Rebecca Rye – Dominion Energy ([Rebecca.P.Rye@dominionenergy.com](mailto:Rebecca.P.Rye@dominionenergy.com))

IAB Vice-Chair: Kat Sico – Duke Energy ([Kat.Sico@duke-energy.com](mailto:Kat.Sico@duke-energy.com))

Before submitting a project proposal, it is suggested that researchers and industry members attend the Research Planning Workshop held annually in the fall general meeting to promote discussions between universities and industry for the generation of research topics. At the end of this solicitation there are several suggested research topics. In addition, university researchers and industry members can send descriptions of research topics to the Center Director, Dr. Robert Cox, for consideration.

## II. Requirements for Research Proposals

**Submittal Deadline:** February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, by mid-night local time of project leader

**Eligibility:** Research proposals may be submitted by researchers at CAPER Universities who are not on any project team that has a late, outstanding CAPER final project report unless approved by the Center Director. Adjunct researchers may be members of a project team but cannot serve as a Project Team Lead.

**Evaluation Criteria:** The following criteria will be used by the Industry Advisory Board (IAB), the Center Steering Committee and the Center Director to review, prioritize and select proposals for funding.

1. Industry Issues:
  - a. Does the proposed project have at least one Industry Advisor from the industry membership?
  - b. Does the proposed project have application to the industry?
  - c. Is the project relevant to the needs of the industry?
  - d. Is there student involvement? Are the students involved graduate or undergraduate?

- e. Sound collaboration plan between industry and universities.
2. Center Issues:
    - a. Does the project proposal align with the solicitation?
    - b. Are there researchers from at least two different universities?
    - c. Is there collaboration between universities equitable?
  3. Quality:
    - a. Is the proposed project innovative and creative?
    - b. Does the project team have good past records?
    - b. Are the deliverables relevant and applicable?
  4. Budget and Equity Issues:
    - a. Does the project contain equitable university funding requests?
    - b. Is the budget in line with the scope of the work, typically \$45,000 per project?
    - c. Does the project contribute to the balance between basic vs. applied research?
    - d. Does the proposed project support CAPER's vision to educate students by including them in the project?
    - e. Does the proposed project have one Project Leader and at least one researcher from another university?

**Project Duration:** A project should not span more than two years. An example project timeline for the first year will run from August 16, 2026 to August 15, 2027 to align with the academic year. Funding will be provided once sufficient industry membership support has been received at the Lead University. Final Reports are due at the end of the project period (typically within 30 days). Industry Advisors must review each Final Report before it is submitted.

**Funding Period:** Selected projects begin as soon as funds are available, and funding is on a calendar basis.

**Budget for New Projects:** The number of projects that will be funded for 2026 will be determined by the number of industry members that have executed industry membership agreements and have delivered the funds to CAPER by March 1, 2026.

**Projects per Researcher:** Typically, CAPER will fund one new project each period for a researcher as the Project Lead or as a Project Team member. If a researcher is on the team of more than one selected proposal, then that researcher should expect a reduction in funding of \$5,000 per project per funding year.

**Project Budgets:** The typical budget for a single project is \$45,000 per funding year, which includes direct and indirect costs.

**Research Themes:** Each proposal must designate one of the designated five research focus areas. Proposals are discouraged from crossing over multiple research themes.

**Industry Advisors:** Each proposal must have at least one industry advisor contact and a collaboration plan between the research teams and the industry advisor. (Examples include: team meeting schedule and expectations by advisor(s), etc.

**Proposal Length:** Proposals shall not exceed five pages excluding all biographies and references. Any proposals exceeding five pages will have the extra pages discarded before evaluation.

**Proposal Format:** All proposals must be submitted in the CAPER Project Proposal Template. The template is attached to the solicitation.

**Presentation to Industry Advisory Board:** All proposals must be presented to the IAB during the next CAPER meeting. The project presentation template is attached to the solicitation.

**Proposal Submissions:** All proposals shall be submitted to the CAPER proposal submission email address:

Email: [caper-proposals@charlotte.edu](mailto:caper-proposals@charlotte.edu)

### **2026 CAPER Research Proposal Submittal, Review and Approval Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action Items</b>
October 29-30, 2025	Attend the CAPER 2025 Fall Workshop – Research Planning
December 15, 2025	2026 CAPER Research Solicitation Announcement
February 28, 2026	Deadline to submit proposals by email to: <a href="mailto:caper-proposals@charlotte.edu">caper-proposals@charlotte.edu</a>
March 6, 2026	PI's notified on acceptance of proposal for presenting to the IAB
March 26, 2026	Proposals presented to IAB at the CAPER 2026 Spring Meeting
April 28, 2026	Center Director notifies Project Leads of selected proposals

### **III. Research Themes - CAPER's primary research focus areas are:**

#### **Power Delivery Infrastructure and Systems**

This research focuses on the impacts that an increasing penetration of distributed generation resources and a desired resiliency to extreme weather events have on the power delivery system.

#### **Power Utilization and Energy Efficiency**

This research focus deals with evaluation of smart distribution systems and energy analytics to meet increasing customer demands and expectations of energy utilization.

#### **Generation, Storage and Integration**

This research focus deals with developing and demonstrating optimal strategies to manage diverse distributed resources and storage.

#### **Data Management, Analytics and Security**

This research addresses new technologies, and the wide-spread application of small-scale component sensors and data collection equipment have greatly increased the amounts of available data, but the challenge is how to manage, use and act on huge amounts of system data.

#### **Energy Policy, Markets and Economics**

This research focus deals with the impacts that regulatory policies and requirements place on the planning, design, and operations of the grid.

### **IV. Publication Guidelines If Awarded – Ref. CAPER Membership Agreement - Page 1, Section E:**

Publication. The Center Universities reserve the right to publish in scientific or engineering journals and to present in professional meetings the results of any research performed by the Center.

Each Center University will submit any proposed publication or presentation containing results of the research program of the Center-to-Center Member. Center Member shall have the right to request a delay in publication for a period not exceeding ninety (90) days from the date of submission to Center Member, for proprietary reasons, provided that Center Member makes a written request and justification for such delay to the Center University within thirty (30) days from the date the proposed publication or presentation is submitted to Center Member.