

Grant writing

The basics

Research & Enterprise

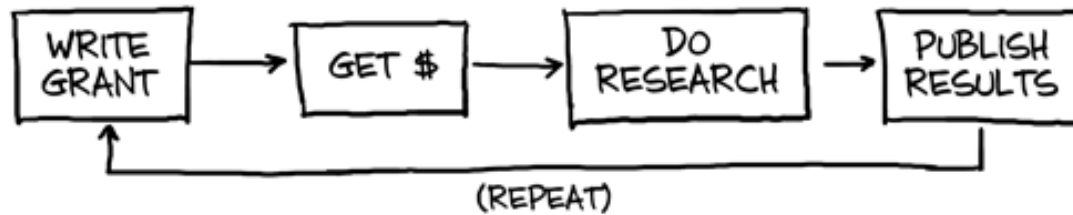
Outline

- These guidelines are transferable to a variety of grant applications. However, always carefully read the guidelines for any application you are writing for.
- Successful grant writing involves the coordination of several activities, including planning, searching for data and resources, writing and packaging a proposal, submitting a proposal to a funder, and follow-up.

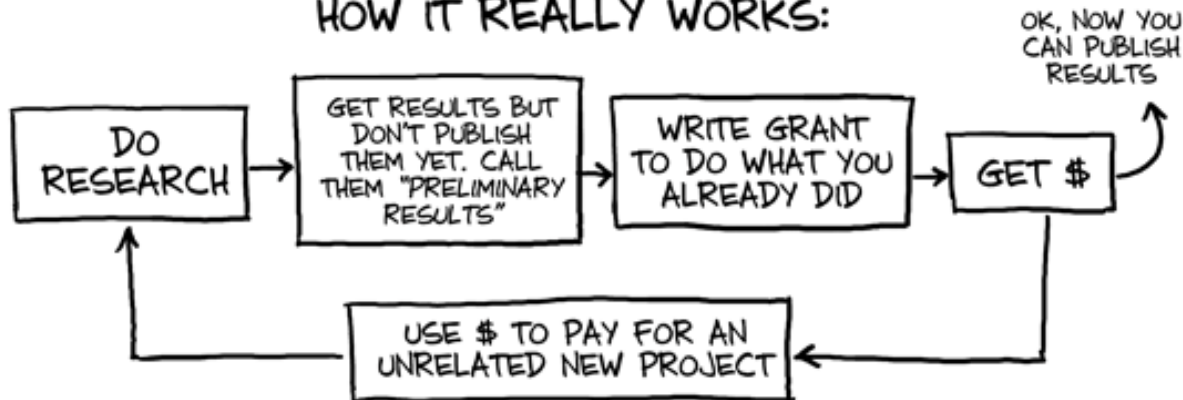


THE GRANT CYCLE

HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK:



HOW IT REALLY WORKS:



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Preparation

You are likely to find preliminary grant writing steps to be the most time consuming, yet most vital aspect of the process. If done well, your preparatory work will simplify the writing stage.

1. Define your project

- Clarify the purpose of your project and write a concise outline/purpose.
- Define the scope of work to focus your funding search.

Preparation continued

- Determine the broad project goals, then identify the specific objectives that define how you will focus the work to accomplish those goals.
- Who is the audience, who will benefit?
[panel](#)
- Industry/government priorities etc.
- Draft project outcomes in specific measurable terms.
- Against the scoped project – who is the team

Seeking funding

- Funding databases, the Research Development Team, Industry links are some of the resources available to assist your funding search.
- Do not limit your funding search to one source.
- Understand the funders priorities; look for a match between your project and the funders you seek by looking for consistency between the purpose and goals.
- Read proposal guidelines.

Guidelines

Read the guidelines carefully, then read them again. Seek clarification to your questions.

Guidelines usually tell you about:

submission deadlines

eligibility

proposal format

timetable

budgets

funding goals and priorities

evaluation process and criteria

contact details

other submission requirements

Writing the application/proposal

- Structure, attention to specifications, concise persuasive writing, and a reasonable budget are the critical elements of the writing stage.
- Read the guidelines for specifications about required information and how it should be arranged.
- Standard proposal components are: the narrative, budget, appendix of support material, and delegated authority signature.

Backgrounds & Narratives

Typically must satisfy the following questions:

- What concern will be addressed and why it is important?
- Why now?
- Who will benefit and how?
- How does this funding request relate to the funders purpose, objectives, and priorities?
- Who is the team and how do we qualify to meet this need?

Budget

Budgets are cost projections. Be sure that the budget is realistic and cover the full cost of the project.

Budgets reflect how projects will be implemented and managed.

Well-planned budgets reflect carefully thought out projects. Be sure to only include those things the funder is willing to support.

- Many funders provide budget templates forms that must be submitted with the proposal.
- Don't forget to list in-kind and matching revenue.

The HOOK

There are many ways to represent the same idea.
However, the HOOK tailors the description of the idea to the interest of a particular funder.

This is a critical aspect of any proposal because it determines how reviewers will perceive your proposal to be. Engage the readers – what will make your proposal memorable.

Basic Tips and Hints

Work out the overall tone of your research plan.

Understand your audience. Reviewers may be experts in your field but not in your topic.

Include basic, obvious information throughout. Keep it concise and avoid convoluted arguments & jargon.

Guide your reader through every sentence and idea.

- Define your aims. Demonstrate that your aims are realistic. Explain how you can accomplish all of them with the money you will receive. And in the time allowed.

- Keep sentences short
- Make every sentence count
- Define abbreviations and use them sparingly
- Avoid excessive use of might, maybe, could perhaps
- Avoid grammatical and spelling errors
- Make it as clear as you can
- Avoid repetition

Things you can change

- Too vague
- Too much jargon or hype
- Incomprehensible
- No hypothesis or aim or clear discovery component
- Poor research plan / methodology
- Team not appropriate
- Not cutting edge (“business as usual”, “filling gaps”, “incremental”)

Basic Tips and Hints continued

What is the significance of your work in the larger context of educational knowledge and your field?

How much will knowledge be expanded because of the work? Not business as usual.

Make sure the underlying science and experiments behind your plan are sound, feasible and complete.

Get it reviewed in line with the guidelines.

Get it peer reviewed.

Summary

- **Keep your research proposal focused.** Tailor your proposed research to the funding body's area of interest. If your proposal is in response to a call for submissions, it should fit the remit and directly addresses the presented challenge.
- **Be persuasive,** a grant application is in effect a sales pitch. Make sure it grabs the attention of reviewers who will have many competing applications. This means having a really strong abstract and gripping first sentence. Make sure the research proposal forms a coherent story.



- **Formulate a strong hypothesis**, so your application is not seen as ‘a technique in search of a problem’ or ‘a fishing expedition’. It may strengthen your case to evaluate other hypotheses against your chosen one.
- **Put in detail** to convince reviewers you are an expert in your field and have thoroughly thought through your proposal. Be clear about the research methodology you will use.
- **Be informed about the research area** (what are the emerging hot topics?). Knowing the literature, funding sources, but also the competition and potential panel members will help pitch your application. Use references to show you are familiar with the field.



- **Be realistic** in the scope of your proposed work, findings and costings. Find out who can help you put together a realistic budget.
- **Show your ability to plan.** Include a Gantt chart, showing the different strands of your research mapped across the time available, as this is very persuasive. Include major decisions points as well.
- **Preliminary data** will show you have the technical ability and technology to generate and interpret the data required and your proposed approach. This is not applicable in all research areas.
- **Edit, edit and edit again.** Write clearly and succinctly. Make sure there are absolutely no spelling mistakes. Errors in your application will raise doubts over your thoroughness in your research.

- **Ask colleagues to comment on your work.** Read their successful proposals.
- Attend a course. Most major funding rounds have workshops and or roadshows on applying for funding. It is well worth attending one of these.
- **Allow plenty of time.** A proposal received after a deadline is unlikely to be considered. Find out internal deadlines if University support or signature is needed, this is generally a week before submission if you want feedback or three days if just requiring signature. There may also be an internal peer review process, which is a means of improving your application using the expertise of experienced staff.
- **Follow any guidelines to the letter.**

