

## External Grants: Proposal Writing Tips

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### Before You Begin

- Acquaint yourself with information on the sponsor and the program. Compare your project with the purposes/objectives of the sponsor.
- Ensure that you, your project, and/or the University are eligible.
- Ensure that you have a clear understanding of both the applicable sponsor and University application requirements and procedures.
- Obtain and review the current application form and/or guidelines.
- Discuss your project with colleagues who may have applied to the same sponsor or who are known to be successful proposal writers.

### Proposal - General

- Complete every section of the application and address any specific questions or content requirements. The proposal should "stand alone," and not be dependent on any appended material. If a section of the application does not apply, explain the reason for not responding.
- Use a clear and concise writing style. Material should be well-organized, logically presented, clearly sectioned and cross-referenced. Avoid the use of highly technical writing and unnecessary jargon.
- Do not assume that reviewers will be experts in your specific field, that they will be familiar with your work, or that the significance of the project will be self-evident. Your ideas, approach, or methods may have to be especially carefully explained, if the adjudicators include professionals, lay people, or specialists from other disciplines.
- Take into account any comments from previous reviews and integrate your responses into the proposal.
- Try to anticipate questions that adjudicators may ask and prepare your text accordingly.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the literature and focus on gaps in the published works. Provide an up-to-date bibliography if requested.
- Discuss the project-related qualifications of both yourself and co-applicant(s). State the role and expertise of the research team. Provide your current curriculum vita as well as capsule biographies of any professional staff.
- List and append all supporting documents, i.e. certifications (ethics or animal care), questionnaires, publications, resumes.
- Provide the required number of copies and meet the stated deadline.

### Proposal - Content

- Clearly define the project's purposes and objectives.
- Describe and justify the project design, approach, and methodology.
- Present a realistic project schedule using timetables, milestones, etc.
- Ensure that what you propose to do is workable in the available time and with the amount requested.

### Timing

- Begin your preparation early, allowing enough time to draft, review, consult, and redraft the proposal.
- Allow additional time for the proposal to be reviewed by your department head, certified for ethics, animal care, or other special requirements, and signed by departmental and University officials.