

GRANT APPLICATION - TIPS FOR SUCCESS

There are some general rules for success when you are writing a proposal for a grant. When developing your proposal, think of it not only as a research methodology which shows you have a clear and well-reasoned approach to investigating the problem, but also as a:

- business plan, showing your proposal represents a sound investment which will lead to a valuable and innovative research outcome; and a
- project plan, showing you can manage the delivery of a valuable project, on time, on budget and within resources.

Ways to increase your prospects of success include:

- Pay close attention and comply to all the guidelines and requirements;
- Excite! convey enthusiasm, innovation and insight;
- Influence: think what will most influence those who will assess your proposal;
- Establish credibility: clearly explain your methodology and convincingly argue why it is the most effective approach;
- Build confidence: demonstrate track record, competence and connections; explain why you are best-placed to deliver;
- Differentiate: show how your proposal is novel, unique, necessary, and timely or has greater scope for a good outcome.

1. TITLE & SUMMARY

The title of the project is vital. Ideally, it will:

- be short, crisp and eye-catching;
- use clear, easy English;
- capture the essence of the problem; and
- indicate how your research may explore or solve it.

The summary (sometimes restricted to 100 words) is the first make-or-break test you'll face. It influences the reader favourably or unfavourably to the rest of your proposal: it highlights the significance of the issue or problem.

- indicate the research is original or unique in its field; and
- explain how it will address the problem.

These three aspects need to be reflected in your title and summary:

- aims;
- significance and innovation; and
- outcomes.

Always revise the title and summary after completing the full application!

2. AIMS

List your aims clearly. Explain:

- how your project advances knowledge in its field;
- the broad intent of the research;
- what you intend to do; and
- the expected outcome.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

Explain the impact of your research on “pharmaceutical world”:

- explain how the research is original or innovative; and
- answer the questions “why are you doing it?” and “so what?”.

4. OUTCOMES

State what you expect the research to yield. This could be:

- a new technology;
- a new system or methodology; and
- an outcome of value to industry, or society (specify the value).

5. GUIDELINES AND TIMELINES

Read application guidelines with care. Prepare a checklist and address them all. Take note of weightings, or point scores, given to different parts of the application. Give special attention to the parts with the highest score.

- Make sure that your research plan stacks up with the declared aim of the research – i.e. that you can deliver the promised outcome; and
- Explain how the research plan will work, using timelines and flowcharts. If possible, set deadlines.

6. WRITING STYLE

How well you write will influence the success of your project. A strong, clearly-written, well-reasoned proposal is more likely to be funded than one which is complex, contorted and jargon-riddled.

- use good, plain English and check your grammar;
- use crisp, vigorous language that gives your proposal a feeling of dynamism;
- keep sentences short: one idea to a sentence;
- use short paragraphs;
- avoid complex sentence structures that confuse or bore;
- design the proposal to be read by a fast, busy reader, who wants to grasp the main points easily;

- lay it out clearly: avoid huge slabs of text;
- impress the reader with clear thought and reasoning;
- avoid: adjectives, adverbs, acronyms and tautologies; and
- obtain feedback from a colleague.

7. IF YOU GET A KNOCK BACK

Don't become discouraged. Even the best researchers aren't successful every time. Read the reviewer's reports, then put them away and ponder the general criticisms for a few days.

- list each reviewer's points, most important first;
- talk to experienced colleagues about ways to improve your future prospects of success;
- ask for examples of successful proposals; and
- keep reviewer's comments to help you improve future proposals.

!!! GOOD LUCK !!!