Grant Writing Tips
Office of Research and Innovation

Key tips before you get started

- Read the funding rules/guidelines thoroughly before you start writing!
- Always know your audience. Are the panel members all subject knowledge experts? If in doubt, assume not
- Use plain English and define key terms
- Be clear and succinct
- Use short, sharp sentences and paragraphs
- Make it compelling
- If you need to list things, use dot points
- Have white space
- And remember, a good proposal stems from a good, sound concept.

Project title

- Keep under 20 words
- Make it catchy and memorable.

Project summary

- Keep around 50-100 words if no limit or stick to limit set
- Use plain English – the language needs to be suitable for public release
- Include aims, outcomes, significance and social and/or economic benefit of the research
- Why should this project be funded over all of the others? What is the hook?
- Often best to write this last
- Can be used as a marketing tool.

Aims

- What is the field? What is the object of the research?
- Keep aims clear and succinct
- Use dot points where possible rather than long winded sentences
- What is the nature of the research – basic, strategic, applied or experimental?
- Is it really feasible? Has this work been done elsewhere? What makes this research unique?

Background

- Use this section to let the reader know the context of the research issues
- Use subheadings to identify themes and/or other issues
- How do people achieve the objective now? Are there any current unresolved issues in the field? Why are they unresolved? How will you overcome the problem/issue?
- Bring out your knowledge of the field and literature. Let readers know you have the expertise – you are not only selling the idea, you are also selling the researcher/team
• Include information about recent international progress in the field of research and the relationship of this proposal to work in the field generally
• Define your key terms and cite easily accessible references wherever possible.

**Significance and Innovation**

• Describe and detail the significance of the research and whether the research addresses an important problem. Consider the following when writing this section:
  o Why undertake the research?
  o Will this project strengthen basic knowledge?
  o Will this project answer an important practical or significant problem?
  o Will this project have particular resonance for the future (i.e. issues of national/international importance)?
  o How will the anticipated outcomes advance the knowledge base of the discipline?
  o What is novel and innovative about the approach to be used?
  o What new methodologies or technologies will be developed?

**Approach/methodology**

• Describe the conceptual framework
• Describe the design and methods to be used
• Explain how these steps are appropriate and well integrated with the aims of the project
• Provide step by step detail
• Explain how data will be collected and what will be done with it (i.e. what framework will inform analysis)
• Convince the reader that you understand/have experience in undertaking qualitative/quantitative research.

**Training**

• If the research work provides research training explain how the intellectual content and scale of the work proposed is deserving of a PhD.
• If the research training is embedded in a larger project describe/separate the part the student will focus on.

**Timeline**

• This will assist the reader to measure the project’s feasibility
• Link phases of the research plan/approach with the anticipated timeline
• Explain who is doing what
• List any milestones – draft reports etc
• Don’t forget to build in time for any ethics clearances required.

**Expected outcomes**

• Describe the expected outcomes and likely impact of the proposed research
• Link to the aims – what will be the results of the planned actions?
• Be realistic – the project and the researcher/team will be judged on these outcomes.
Communication of results

- Outline the plans for communicating the results - think of end-users and the benefits of the research
- If it is planned for research to be published or presented at a conference be specific and give names
- What media strategies are there?
- What about training of students?

Benefit of the research

- Describe how the research project might result in social and/or economic benefits
- What are the expected benefits for the specific industry/field and/or industry sector?
- What are the benefits for the Australian community more broadly?
- Are there international benefits also?

Description of personnel

- Summarise the role, responsibility and contributions of each named Investigator
- Who brings what expertise? Are there particular areas of the research project that different Investigators will lead (if allowed in funding guidelines)?
- Summarise the roles and levels of involvement of other participants (i.e. technical staff, students, research assistants and/or research associates).

References

- Include a list of all references (check the word limit set for this)
- Cite only the key international, substantive and easily accessible references where possible
- Avoid using a footnote system – endnotes are much neater.

Further assistance and advice

For further assistance and advice in relation to your grant proposals, please contact the Research Grants and Business Development team:

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