

OVERVIEW

Like all writing, grant writing should strive to be:

Concise	Get right to the point. You will most likely have a limited amount of space at your disposal.
Clear	Use the language of the funding agency.
Coherent	Ensure a logical flow and linkage between sections and paragraphs.
Compelling	Make the impact and relevance of your work clear from the outset. Do not wait until later in the proposal to make your point. You are telling a story and need to hook your reader.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Put the proposal into context:

Determine who your audience is: peers/experts in your discipline, multi-disciplinary committees, non-academic/policy makers or other end users, all have a unique perspective that you must take into consideration.

Give the broader picture:

What is the value added and impact of your work?

- Focus on the big picture: demonstrate the relevance of your work.
- Even if it seems to be stating the obvious, articulate what your research is about to a multi-disciplinary or external audience without oversimplifying or diluting the message, while still displaying in-depth knowledge and expertise in your area.

Begin each paragraph with an impact statement:

The concluding sentence should reiterate your message and logically lead to the next point.

Enhance readability:

Visual breaks (white space) make it easier for reviewers to find information and assess linkage between objectives-theory-methodology. Especially important for online/mobile reading!

THE PROPOSAL | SUMMARY

It will set the first impression of the proposal and may well be the only section that committee members read if they do not fully review your proposal.

Its content should:

- Clearly identify the research problem/issue and explain why it is important and relevant
- State your objectives – short and long-term
- Give an overview of the theory and state your hypotheses/research questions
- Outline briefly the methodology
- Identify the expected academic contribution and open up to the potential wider social benefit – a large general topic of wide interest (environment, new social technologies, the economy, etc.)

The title of your proposal is equally as important: make it clear and specific.

THE PROPOSAL | INTRODUCTION

- Open with a brief statement – what you propose to do, and why (impact/relevance).
- Set the general context.
- Expand on the summary.

Grantsmanship Tips

THE PROPOSAL | OBJECTIVES

- Focus on outcomes, not activities.
- Clearly articulate expected contribution to knowledge.
- Begin with a clear, brief statement followed by bullet points to organize sub-items.
- Objectives should fit a funding opportunity's purpose and structure.

THE PROPOSAL | CONTEXT, LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Expand on the previously stated general context. Explain why the objectives are important – demonstrate knowledge of the conceptual framework, literature review, real world need, and outline your past research.
- Give a general overview of the field and more detail about literature directly relevant to your specific objectives.
- Identify the knowledge gap that you plan to fill.
- What makes your approach significant and unique?
- Be sure to address any competing theories, and identify why your approach is suited to your topic.
- Your bibliography should include recent/up-to-date citations, classic ones, and yours as well.

THE PROPOSAL | METHODOLOGY

- One of the most common areas needing attention.
- Provide specific details to answer the following:
 - Why have you chosen this specific methodology? Is it rigorous?
 - Is your plan feasible?
 - Are you likely to achieve your objectives doing it this way?
 - Are there any specific challenges/limitations? How will you address these?
- Clearly link methodology to objectives, theory, student training and budget.
- Provide enough detail for a peer in your field to evaluate your knowledge of your discipline and suitability of the approach.

THE PROPOSAL | FINAL THOUGHTS

“Package” the content:

- Be attentive to section headings, paragraphs, bullet points, white space, tables or diagrams if appropriate, font and pagination.
- Follow guidelines for length (e.g. seven pages - and not too far under the limit).

R&R (Review and Revise):

- Ask at least two people to read the draft – one ‘expert’ perspective (e.g. a peer in your discipline or a related one) and one ‘general’ perspective (your Advisor, Research Development) far enough ahead of deadline to allow you to incorporate feedback!