

Writing a Research Grant Proposal

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Selecting a Grant

- Will obtaining the grant aid your studies/career?
- Do you have time to allot to requirements?
- Do you meet the criteria?
- Is it feasible to finish the application prior to the deadline?
- Is there a necessary output? Is that achievable?

General Tips

- Know the culture of the funder
- Follow the instructions
- Know the assessment criteria
- Treat the application like an argument and present it with confidence
- Use the appropriate disciplinary concepts and methods

Writing a Research Proposal

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Purpose of A Proposal

- To show you have a worthwhile research project to undertake
- To demonstrate that YOU have the competence to complete it
- To discuss all relevant aspects of the research process
- To enable others to evaluate whether enough information exists to want to support the proposed study
 - As a supervisor (e.g. a thesis)
 - As a grant (e.g. internal, provincial, federal/Tri-Council)
 - As a funder (e.g. industry)
- It can provide a stepping stone to new opportunities

Background

- General Idea Selection
 - Turn to the literature that pertains to your area of interest
 - Ideas from courses attended and research discussed
 - Ideas from media – news, science magazines, etc.
- Once You Have a Topic
 - Glean from courses taken in writing, research methods
 - Develop a strategy for addressing all relevant components
 - Title – concise yet sufficiently descriptive
 - Abstract – e.g. 400 words summarizing the research project
 - Introduction
 - Background content, Rationale, Research Qs.
 - Frame the research problem!
 - Develop your hypotheses

Introduction

Study Title

- “From Annette Funicello to Justin Timberlake: The History of the Mickey Mouse Club”

Context

- Literature Review

Objective

- A goal, what you are aiming to achieve

Literature Review

- Literature Searching
 - Are your ideas **novel**?
 - Sources: academic literature, grey literature
 - Where are the research **gaps**? Be a critical thinker!
 - Show you can integrate and synthesize the existing literature
 - Nothing is perfect - illustrate some potential issues you may encounter and how you will deal with them (e.g. small N)
- Writing
 - 4 “Cs” in Diamonds, 3 “Cs” in Research Writing
 - Clear, Coherent, and Compelling (as Competitive)!
 - Macro over Micro-details
 - Don’t get caught up in the little details; keep a “big picture” view
 - Write and cite and cite and cite!
 - Plagiarism is a serious academic offense
 - Set some parameters!
 - e.g. Geographic: Canada-wide versus Winnipeg’s North End

“Research Q”(s)

- WHAT do you wish to accomplish?
- As with goals, is the question S.M.A.R.T.?
 - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound
 - Is it a feasible question (scope, time, budget)?
 - Beware of “scope creep”!

Research Q Example:

- Do socioeconomic factors (income, education, employment) play a role in non-fatal traffic injury incidence and severity?

Research Qs

WEAK Research Qs

- *Rsrch Q: Will holding workshops reduce school violence?*
- *Rsrch Q: Can high school suspension rates be changed?*
- *Rsrch Q: Can identity be determined by carbon dating?*

STRONG Research Qs

- *Rsrch Q: Will one hour hands-on car seat training sessions reduce child motor vehicle injuries in Winnipeg?*

Methodology

- HOW will you answer your research question?
 - Five ‘W’s & H’: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How
- Methods must be well thought out and comprehensive
- Research Design
 - Qualitative or Quantitative or Mixed-Methods?
 - Cross-sectional or longitudinal surveys?
 - Primary or secondary data analysis?
 - If primary - Tool validation: pilot studies, validity statistics?
- Procedures: $X \rightarrow Y \rightarrow Z$, be logical and sequential
- Inclusion/exclusion vs. leave to “assume”
- Participants – communities, individuals, groups?
- Materials Used: Tools, instruments, equipment
- Key Question: Could someone ELSE carry out this entire project?

Anticipated Findings and their Significance

- A key factor in any research endeavour is the anticipated results
- How will this project contribute to science, knowledge, or innovation?
- Why will your proposal be chosen over others for funding?
- **IMPACT.**

KT, KD & KM

Knowledge Translation (KT)

- A dynamic process that involves synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethical use of knowledge to improve the lives of Canadians
- Develop handouts, factsheets, doing presentations - at level of audience

Knowledge Dissemination (KD)

- Transferring knowledge within and across settings, with the expectation that the knowledge will be "used" such as for learning, or attitude/ behaviour change
- Conduct workshops, create a website, transfer knowledge to end-users

- Possible Outcomes
 - Increased awareness;
 - Greater capacity for informed decision making
 - Further information exchange

Knowledge Mobilization (KMb)

- “The specific activities and tools that facilitate the multi-directional flow and exchange of research knowledge”

Proposed Budget and Timeline

Proposed Budget

- All-inclusive!
- Research how much all supplies, materials, R.A.s cost
- For personnel you must factor in benefits, vacation time
- “No padding” - Evaluators are aware of what things cost
- Can include student charges/hires, supplies, travel costs

Proposed Timeline

- Determine how much time must be allotted
- Batch the different tasks to complete overall
- Break them down further
- A Gantt Chart is a very good tool!

Reviewing a Research Proposal

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Reviewing

- Meets criteria
- Within scope
- Rigor of endeavour
- Importance to career path/relevance
- Research background
 - High G.P.A.
 - Awards/Scholarships/Fellowships
 - Experience/Publications/Conferences
- Tools can be helpful

Closing Remarks

- DREAM...
- Innovate...
- Create...
- Disseminate...
- Think outside the mid-size box (topic scope)
- Cover all components
- Be meticulous (cross all “t”s, dot all “i”s)
 - Proof-read, errors, non-sensical sentences etc.
- Be passionate about YOUR research!

Questions



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Contact Information

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