

Enhancing the Competitiveness of Your External Proposal

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AGENDA

- 1. Write with your reviewer in mind**
- 2. Tell your story as a research hero – your professional hero’s journey**
- 3. Pivot to maximize the broad impact of your research**
- 4. Write early, get feedback**
- 5. Submit often**
- 6. Be a reviewer – volunteer to serve on funders’ review panels**
- 7. Involve the Office of Research early in your process**
We’re here to help you!

The following is an excerpt from

The Grant-Writing Handbook: The Professor's Guide

by Karen Kelsky, Ph.D.

The Professor Is In

www.theprofessorisin.com

The Top Eight Grant-Killing Mistakes

1. You did not abide by the published guidelines for submission in elements such as font size, margin width, and word length.
2. You have sloppy typos, misspellings, or grammar errors.
3. You never state explicitly what you are applying for support for, and why.
4. You did not articulate a project that meets the published mission and goals of the grant.
5. You were disorganized, rambling, and vague, especially in the first two paragraphs.
6. You did not answer the questions of how/when/where you intend to conduct the project.
7. You tell, rather than show.
8. You used excessive, field-specific jargon.

The Qualities of a Winning Grant Proposal

- A winning grant proposal essay will grab the reviewer's attention in its first 1-3 sentences, and not let go throughout the entire thing.
- It will speak directly to the mission of the funding agency and show how the project advances it.
- Every word will sing with meaning and import. There will be no fluff, no filler, no

“indeed it can be argued that...” and “it is certainly worth noting, on the other hand, that...” These are wasted verbiage that bores the reader and squanders the word limit.

All words must be comprehensible to a highly educated reader not necessarily in one specific field. Committees are often interdisciplinary, and the grant must make a case that is legible across disciplinary boundaries.

- It will do more with less. Far from playing games with fonts and margins to try and squeeze “just a little more” into the limited space, it will be spacious, expansive, and at ease with itself. Because every word pulls its weight, fewer words are needed. There is eye-relieving white space on the paper.
- It articulates an original, innovative project, and then shows, rather than tells, how it is innovative and how it will impact the scholarly field in which the author works.
- It leaves no pragmatic question unanswered. Where will the scholar work? Under what schedule? With what equipment? How will it be paid for? When will it be completed? What will be the product?

“The Foolproof Research Proposal Template”

