



Grant Writing Guidelines

These guidelines have been curated to help you craft compelling grant proposals and navigate the path to successful funding. Remember, each grant application may have specific requirements and guidelines, so it is important to carefully review and follow the instructions provided by the funder. These guidelines typically pertain to stage 1 applications.

1. Search and select appropriate grants: Start by identifying grants that align with a project or organisation goals and objectives. Look for funding opportunities from foundations, government agencies, and other sources that support your specific area of focus.

2. Read the guidelines thoroughly: Once you have identified a potential grant, carefully review the guidelines provided by the funding agency. Pay close attention to eligibility requirements, funding priorities, deadlines, and instructions for application submission noting any word limits, formatting requirements, and requested attachments.

3. Develop a compelling proposal: Refer to preliminary work already done in the area such as feasibility, co-production etc. Your proposal should clearly and concisely communicate the purpose, goals, and expected outcomes of your project. Some useful points to keep in mind:

- Use compelling and engaging language and statistics to demonstrate the significance and impact of your work.
- Make sure your proposal is well-structured, organised, and easy to follow
- Use Bold font for subheadings or key lines in the beginning or end of a paragraph (if funding body guidelines allow)
- Use tables/diagrams where appropriate (tables save space)
- Add details on potential challenges and mitigation strategies
- Use short and concise sentences
- Keeping your audience in mind, minimise detailed definitions of widely known concepts or common problems (this would help save your word count)
- Avoid using extra words where possible (e.g., instead of 'may suggest', simply use 'suggest')
- Use the active voice
- Use action words (e.g., 'we will' instead of 'we propose')
- Help the reader by using transition sentences when starting a new paragraph
- Maintain a symmetrical structure (i.e., use the same terminology throughout for consistency)
- Continuously refer to the application guidelines

4. Use the Theory of Change (ToC) approach: Arrange ToC workshops as soon as you identify and select a grant application for submission. This will provide a framework for planning and to engage stakeholders. Involve team members, collaborators, or stakeholders to gain diverse perspectives and insights. Discuss the grant's objectives and brainstorm ideas collaboratively to ensure a well-rounded proposal.

5. Ethics approval: Prioritise ethical conduct and transparency in all aspects of the proposed application or project, aligning with applicable ethical guidelines. This commitment includes safeguarding the rights and welfare of participants, maintaining data integrity, and adhering



to relevant ethical review processes i.e., mention the ethical review committees you will seek approval from. Clearly outline steps taken to minimise harm, obtain informed consent from human participants or ensure animal welfare, depending on the subjects involved. Outline your data management plan, including data collection, storage, and sharing.

6. Address the funder's priorities and criteria: Tailor your proposal to address the specific priorities and evaluation criteria mentioned in the grant guidelines. Showcase how your project aligns with the funder's interests and goals.

7. Ensure a strong project budget: Create a realistic budget that accurately represents the financial needs of your project. Be clear about how the grant funds will be used, and make sure your budget aligns with the funder's budget guidelines and restrictions. Costings and budget plan should be realistic and transparent.

8. Include supporting documents: Depending on the grant guidelines, you may need to provide supporting documents such as letters of support, resumes of key personnel, organisational financial statements, or project timelines. Ensure that all required supporting materials such as ToC narrative document, data management plan, risk management plan etc are included and organised properly.

9. Review and edit: Before submitting your grant application, thoroughly review and edit your proposal. Check for grammar and spelling errors, inconsistencies, and unclear phrasing.

10. Peer feedback: Leave ample time to have other colleagues/experts review and provide feedback on your proposal as well.

11. Read and reread: Read and reread your draft multiple times and structure it so that it aligns well with the grantor's mission, objectives, and priorities. Rereading the drafts several times ensures the clarity and persuasiveness of your proposal, ensuring it effectively communicates the significance of your project.

12. Mandatory checks before submission: Revisit the grant guidelines one last time to confirm that every requirement has been met. Conduct a final, thorough proofread and double-check that your proposal meets all formatting, word count, and submission requirements as specified in the guidelines. Ensure all necessary documents, such as letters of support or budget details are included and formatted correctly.

13. Submit on time: Make sure to submit your grant application well before the deadline to account for any unforeseen issues. Late submissions are often not accepted, so be mindful of the submission timeline.

14. Maintain a submission record: This should include essential details such as submission date, funding body, related communication, and outcome or response received (if applicable) to effectively track and manage the status of submissions. "A "submission record" typically refers to a documented record or log that keeps track of submissions, such as submitted versions of grant applications, budgets, or other important documents. Maintaining a submission record is important for ensuring accountability and facilitating follow-up actions when necessary.

15. Follow up: If possible, follow up with the funding agency after submitting your application if confirmation or feedback is not received within the specified timeframe. This can help you track the progress of your application and potentially address any additional questions or concerns they may have.



“Grant writing, like chess, is a learnable skill.” – Prof Benoit Mulsant, Professor and the Labatt Family Chair of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto

“Mastering grant writing is akin to honing one’s skills in chess through dedicated effort and practice.” – Muqaddas Asif, Assistant Director Ethics and Governance, PILL

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