

GRANT WRITING CHECKLIST

Tips for Getting Started

Plan ahead. Successful grant writers are always preparing for their next grant. They know their audience. They are ready when deadlines are announced, and stay up to date on policy changes. They have drafts of their applications pre-reviewed, and they have a flexible research plan in place, knowing that no researcher is ever one hundred per cent successful in grant procurement.

Get Advice from peers, mentors, or the SMU Grants Facilitator. SSHRC and other funding agencies also provide tips (see SSHRC webinars, for instance) on writing successful applications.

Create a winning template. Use funding program guidelines to create headings, sub-headings etc. Create a clear and logical application outline. Ask peers and/or the Grants Facilitator to share copies of previously successful grants to use as a model.

Create a timeline. Preparing an effective grant application tends to take longer than one thinks, up to, and possibly longer than, three months. **Don't** wait until the last minute. You won't have time.

Get the more tedious and time-consuming work done first. Keep your CV up to date. Request letters of support well in advance. Get and keep an accurate record of cost estimates.

Tips for Writing a Strong Application

Read and follow carefully the application instructions. If you cannot meet a requirement, inform the funding agency, and get a written exception, if possible. (Missing information on applications will be noticed.) Questions? Contact the funding agency or your Grants Facilitator.

Address ALL evaluation criteria. Be sure you've addressed each criterion clearly and explicitly. Use them, when applicable, as headings and sub-headings.

Help your reviewers help you. *Engage your readers.* Remember, they may not have expertise in your research area, and they have limited time to review your application. Your proposal must be a pleasure to read. Vary your sentence structure. Tell a story, use real-world examples when appropriate, as well as metaphor, analogy. Write in the active voice. Anticipate questions and address them in your narrative. Never assume that reviewers will 'know what you mean.' Show them. Build a case for funding.

Presentation matters. Make an attractive package. Large blocks of text in compound-complex sentences may deter engaged, efficient reading. Use white space, headings, diagrams, timelines, where appropriate.

Get a thorough content review. Ask peers and/or your Grants Facilitator for review and critique. Be willing to rewrite and revise.

Refine your summary page. It is one of the most important documents in the application package, as reviewers with limited time will return to it repeatedly to refresh their memory of your proposal. Drafting your summary early may help to guide the development of your application.

Submit on time. Know internal deadlines for content review, as well as funding agency deadlines.