

Grant Writing Tips

The Internal Grant Program applications are peer reviewed applications. The reviewers, your peers, often read these applications after classes, after a long day in the clinic or lab, at night or on weekends. The most important tip...first and foremost, read the RFA and Instructions, and follow them precisely! Use your best writing and editing skills to make the application reader friendly, in order to ensure the best review possible. “Don’t annoy the reviewer!”

I. **Basic Elements** of Grant Writing

- A. First and foremost carefully read the RFA and “Instructions for Applicants” and **follow the directions precisely.**
- B. **Organization**-The grant application must be well organized according to the “Instructions for Applicants.” The reviewers expect to see a certain format based on these instructions, so be sure to **follow that format.** Always have the proper face page format and information and Table of Contents.
- C. **Lay abstract**- It should be brief but well written. View it as the advertisement for your application. Include all of the relevant information and make it as interesting as possible. **Keep in mind that your audience may not have as much expertise in your area as you do.**
- D. The Grant Application sections should be **clearly labeled.** **Section Titles** of the research plan should be **in bold** and separated by white space.
- E. Within the sections, the paragraphs should be well organized. **Make sure the most important ideas are at the beginning of your paragraph.** Each paragraph should have a topic sentence with one main idea and the rest of the paragraph should have sentences to support that topic sentence.
- F. Use simple sentence construction. Avoid long fact laden sentences. Make your points as directly as possible.
- G. **Use abbreviations and acronyms sparingly.** The 1st time you use an acronym, write out what it stands for and put the acronym in parentheses. After that, you can use the acronym. For example, the first time you would use Individual Dean’s Feasibility Grant (IDFG) and then you may refer to it as IDFG.

II. **Visual Aspects** of the Application – (Should serve as a map for the application)

- A. **Margins**-Use a minimum of 1 inch all around the page.

- B. **Type** should be **Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia** and no smaller than **11 pt** font.
- C. Identify and label all sections in **Bold**.

III. **Proof Read** Your Application for:

- A. **English Usage**-Check your word choice and syntax. Have someone read your grant to make sure the ideas are clearly stated, the application flows smoothly with good transitions, and the grammar and word usage is correct.
- B. **Grammar**-Check for proper sentence structure, spelling, correct word usage (errors are not always picked-up by spell check)
- C. **Flow**-Each idea should lead easily and logically into the next. Make sure all parts of the Research Plan fit together and follow the directions.
- D. **Understanding**-Do you effectively communicate your idea? Have someone **not** in your field read it and give you feed back on how well you have communicated that idea.
- E. **Instructions**-Check that you have **followed instructions exactly** and that you have all of the requirements completed. If your application does not follow directions and/or is incomplete, it may not be reviewed.
- F. **Abstract**-Go back and reread the abstract to make sure that it accurately reflects the research plan that you have written.
- G. **Feedback**-Finally, have someone outside your field of expertise read your proposal and give you feedback. That reader can tell you if your ideas are clear, concise, and well organized. That feedback will also indicate if your research plan makes sense to someone not in your field of expertise. Do not wait until the last minute to do this. Give the person you wish to receive feedback from, plenty of time to read and respond before the receipt date.
- H. **Check List**-Use the “**Instructions to Applicants**” as a checklist to make sure you have included all sections of the application and that they are complete and in the right format. Areas to double check include the Research Plan (**double spaced**) and budget (indirect costs calculated and justification page included).