GRANTWRITING VS ACADEMIC WRITING

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TODAY'S SESSION LOGISTICS

Today's presentation ~25 min

Followed by brief Q&A

Link to slides will be shared

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SPECIALIZES IN

- Strategic grantseeking

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MS, Health Policy, Univ of North Carolina Chapel Hill

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TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

1. The Art of a Strong Grant

2. Academic Writing Conventions

3. Common Problems

4. Useful Resources

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THE ART OF A STRONG GRANT

Strong proposals come from strong concepts.

WHAT'S IN A NARRATIVE?

Strong narratives answer core questions clearly and succinctly.

- What do you want to do, how much will it cost, and how much time will it take?

- How does the proposed project relate to the sponsor's interests?

- What difference will the project make to your institution, your students, your discipline, the state, the nation, and other stakeholders?

- What has already been done, and how will your project advance that work?

- How do you plan to implement and accomplish project goals and outcomes?

- How will the results be evaluated?

- Why should **YOU**, rather than someone else, be selected to do this project?

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USE THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVE

Remember that it doesn't matter what you intended or what you meant if the reader thinks it meant something else.

- Consider the merit of the critiques and modify your descriptions to change your approach or misunderstandings to address true flaws.

- Be most attentive to criticisms presented by <u>multiple</u> reviewers.

- Ask questions if you don't understand the criticisms.

- Ask some reviewers to check the changes designed to address their critiques.

- Beware of the reviewer who steers you toward something more aligned with his/her work.

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Your proposal should communicate your project clearly and appropriately.

Tips for proposal development:

- Know your audience(s).

- Write clearly and in an appropriate style.

- Use S.M.A.R.T. goals.

- Employ skillful repetition and emphasis.

- Make sure all documents tell a coherent story.

- Seek feedback from peers and grant professionals.

- Refine and edit.

WHAT MAKES GRANTWRITING UNIQUE

- **Grantwriting styles differ depending on the funder.**
  - To determine style, find out who the reviewers will be and tailor your writing for them.

- **Grant language should always be clear and straightforward.**
  - Do not let the language get in the way of the content.
  - Do not make your language complex to attempt to sound knowledgeable.
  - Remember that reviewers are often tired: if your language is too complex, they may miss things or get frustrated with you.

- **Grantwriting is persuasive writing.**
  - Write to excite.
  - Balance selling and telling, depending on the funder.

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Above all else: give yourself plenty of time.

ACADEMIC WRITING CONVENTIONS

PROPOSAL WRITING CHARACTERISTICS

Proposal Writing
Sponsor goals: *Service attitude*
Future-oriented: *Work that should be done*
Project-centered: *Objectives and activities*
Persuasive rhetoric: *"Selling" the reader*
Personal tone: *Conveys excitement*
Team-focused: *Feedback needed*
Strict length constraints: *Brevity rewarded*
Accessible language: *Easily understood*

IN CONTRAST, ACADEMIC WRITING IS...

Proposal Writing
Sponsor goals: *Service attitude*
Future-oriented: *Work that should be done*
Project-centered: *Objectives and activities*
Persuasive rhetoric: *"Selling" the reader*
Personal tone: *Conveys excitement*
Team-focused: *Feedback needed*
Strict length constraints: *Brevity rewarded*
Accessible language: *Easily understood*

Academic Writing
Scholarly pursuit: *Individual passion*
Past-oriented: *Work that has been done*
Theme-centered: *Theory and rhetoric*
Expository rhetoric: *Explaining to reader*
Impersonal tone: *Objective, dispassionate*
Individualistic: *Primarily a solo activity*
Few length constraints: *Verbosity rewarded*
Specialized terminology: *"Insider jargon"*

GRANTS   *Why Academics Have a Hard Time Writing Good Grant Proposals* is an essential resource.

PLAN FOR A STRONG MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

1. Is your work of interest to the journal's audience?

2. Do your findings advance understanding in a specific research field?

3. Is your manuscript structured properly?

    a) Did you format your figures and tables properly?

4. Are your conclusions justified by your results?

5. Are your references accessible and global?

6. Did you correct all grammatical and spelling mistakes?

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GRANTS SHOW PRE-SIGNIFICANCE

- Convince your reviewers that you are the right person to do this research
  - Answer the question: *Why me?*
- Convince your reviewers that you will use the funding properly during the funding period.

Convince them that the project is feasible!

SHOWS POST-SIGNIFICANCE

- Presents a report

- Gives greater details

- Read and accepted by experts in the field

- The "why me" aspect is less important

- Needs to convince the readers that the conclusions are correct – and do so by the conclusion

- Visuals are those that feature results, e.g., tables / graphs

- The editor makes the selection

- Resubmission is contingent on journal policy

COMMON PROBLEMS

GRANTWRITING MISTAKES

1. **Poor fit:** Focus of grant request does not align with funder priorities.

2. **Can't follow directions:**
   - Adhering to formatting requirements and page limitations.
   - Fully answering all questions.
   - Including all required attachments in specified order.

3. **Poorly designed:** The statement of need (e.g., gap in knowledge) is not clear, specific and justified with data/research. Project activities do not directly impact stated need.

4. **Inadequate resources & partners:** The capabilities needed for Key stakeholders are not included in program development.

AND THE LIST GOES ON

6. **Immeasurable:** Objectives and outcomes are not project-specific and/or measurable.

7. **Lacks a sustainability plan:** Limited information is provided on how program will be sustained after grant funding ends.

8. **Poorly aligned budget:** Project budget appears unreasonable in relationship to services provided.

9. **Poor presentation:** Final narrative and budget are not reviewed for editing and content errors.

10. **LATE!** Grant is submitted after deadline.

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Academic Writing

- Weak problem statement in the Introduction

- Poorly focused discussions

- Errors in tables and figures

- Incomplete, unintelligible abstracts

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"...proposals must be written in a strong, persuasive style, and [those] accustomed to a different style [should seek] help to develop more effective [grant]writing habits."

Porter, R. (2007). Why Academics Have a Hard Time Writing Good Grant Proposals. *Journal of Research Administration*, 38(2):37. Retrieved from:
http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/funding/documents/Whyacademicsprobsgrantwriting.pdf

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"...proposals must be ~~written~~ strong, persuasive ~~statements~~ ~~accustomed~~ to a differen~~t~~ ~~[seek]~~ help to develop more effective ~~[grant]~~writing habits."

Grantwriting and academic writing are NOT the same!

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http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/funding/documents/Whyacademicsprobsgrantwriting.pdf

USEFUL RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR GRANTWRITING

- The **National Organization for Research Development Professionals (NORDP)** maintains a Writing a Grant 101 page, which includes links to many useful guides, as well as a more general Resources page.

- The **Foundation Center** provides an Introduction to Proposal Writing course, focused more on private grants.

- The Grant Application Writer's Workbook offers comprehensive, step-by-step instruction for creating proposals for a variety of funding agencies.

- The **NIH Office of Extramural Research** (OER) offers guidance for Writing the Application and the **NIAID** offers excellent application samples.

- Porter, R. (2007). Why Academics Have a Hard Time Writing Good Grant Proposals. *Journal of Research Administration*, 38(2):37. Retrieved from: http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/funding/documents/Whyacademicsprobsgrantwriting.pdf

- 10 Red Flags in Grantwriting. Inside Higher Education.

RESOURCES FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) for students and scholars

- The Writer's Handbook at the University of Wisconsin

- The NCBI Style Guide [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Center for Biotechnology Information (US); 2004-. Chapter 5, Style Points and Conventions. Available from: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK995/

- Publishing with Elsevier: Step-by-Step. Available from: https://www.elsevier.com/authors/journal-authors/submit-your-paper

- Pain, E. How to review a paper. *Science*, Sep 22, 2016. Accessed from: https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2016/09/how-review-paper

- Brown, L., David, E. A., Karamlou, T., Nason, K. S. Reviewing scientific manuscripts: A comprehensive guide for peer reviewers. *JTCVS, 2017.* 153(6):1609-1614, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtcvs.2016.12.067

HANOVER RESEARCH

Hanover provides research development, grant writing, and strategic advising support to a wide range of colleges and universities. Our professionals deliver customized proposal review, revision, and production support, while also helping to align strategic priorities to funding trends and opportunities at all levels.

OUR SOLUTIONS

GRANTSEEKING CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Developing organizational capacity to pursue and win grant funding, through training, strategic assessment, and benchmarking.

FUNDING RESEARCH

Identifying and evaluating grant opportunities aligned to member projects, while enabling longer-term planning through funded project research and forecasting.

PRE-PROPOSAL SUPPORT

Assessing and developing competitive project concepts, helping members to navigate funder requirements and build relationships prior to completing submissions.

PROPOSAL SUPPORT

Supporting member-led grant proposal projects by providing review and revision services designed to ensure the strongest possible proposals are submitted.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Leading programmatic grant proposals, in close coordination with member teams, crafting narrative drafts over a defined timeline towards a polished submission.

Please contact us at info@hanoverresearch.com to learn more.

PROPOSAL REVISION

- Revision to address all areas where the proposal does not **comply with funder requirements**.

- **Editing** for spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

- Revision of content for **style and presentation**.

- Revision of formatting to match **best practice** and **funder preference**.

- Revision of the **structure** to improve **logical presentation** of material.

- Identification of material that should be supported with a citation.

- Confirmation that **tables and figures** are numbered correctly and appropriately placed.

- Identification of any **missing / needed content**.

- **Debrief** to review recommendations, proposed changes, and PI questions.

For Proposal Revision projects, Hanover provides a full edit and revision of the proposal with an eye toward compliance, quality, and grantsmanship.

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QUESTIONS?