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THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Scientific Editing and Research Communication Core

Using a timeline to write a grant proposal

Do you ever find yourself scrambling to put the components of a grant application together at the last minute? This stressful situation can be avoided by establishing a timeline to guide you in efficiently developing your proposal.

Benefits of a timeline

Planning a timeline far enough in advance provides the time needed to:

- balance grant writing with your other responsibilities and priorities;
- connect with personnel at the funding agency to confirm the focus of your proposal is relevant to its priorities;
- obtain feedback from colleagues and/or professional editors;
- think about longer-term objectives and how your current proposal fits into your overall research goals and career aspirations;
- generate preliminary data, apply for pilot funding, or establish necessary collaborations;
- obtain institutional approval (e.g., IRB), letters of support, and components of the proposal that are written by others (e.g., biosketches).

Tips for establishing a timeline

- Consider professional and personal commitments and eliminate, defer, or delegate those you can to free up time in your schedule.
- Schedule time for writing at times you can stick to.
- Be realistic – don't set deadlines you can't meet.
- Make sure to plan time for presubmission review by colleagues, editors, and yourself.
- Start earlier than you think you need to; there is no penalty for submitting a grant early.
- Customize a timeline template or the SERCC-recommended timeline for grant proposals to your needs.

Key timepoints and activities to include

These are especially important for NIH Research Project Grants (e.g., NIH R01) or NSF standard grants

Upcoming Opportunities

Have a question about writing grants or research articles? Contact us and we will attempt to answer it in a future newsletter.

Early Career Funding Opportunities and Support Information Session

September 8 | 9:00–9:45 am | Zoom

In this session, the Research Development Office (RDO) will give an overview of various federal and foundation opportunities available to early career faculty. They will also highlight unique support provided to early career faculty by the RDO.

Register here

Limited Submission Opportunity – NSF Major Research instrumentation

September 1 (Due date) | 12:00 pm

The RDO recently hosted a Zoom information session focused on NSF's long-standing Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) Program, to which major changes have been made. The session included an overview of the program solicitation, a summary of major changes and recent restrictions on subawardees, and insights from a previous MRI awardee.

View slides (HawkID authentication required)

Submit internal application

UI Research Services Fair

October 12 | 1:00–4:30 pm | IMU Main Lounge

and can be tailored based on the funding mechanism and the amount of time available to prepare the proposal.

One year before the sponsor deadline

- Sketch out your long-term goal, the aims of the project, and the next steps, in consideration of:
  - the research question you are trying to address;
  - your existing preliminary data; and
  - findings that you expect to have published by the time you submit your grant.
- Discuss these key points with colleagues, collaborators, and others in informal or formal settings (e.g., seminar or workshop).
- Plan to address any deficits that would prevent the application from being funded.
  - Apply for pilot/smaller grants to help fund preliminary experiments.
  - Perform experiments to obtain preliminary data in support of the premise and feasibility of the proposed research.
  - Establish any collaborations that are needed to conduct the research.

Six months before the sponsor deadline

- Prepare a polished Specific Aims/Overview page and send it out for feedback from:
  - colleagues and/or the SERCC (about the science/presentation) and
  - a Program Officer at the funding agency/institute (whether the ideas fit the goals of the funding opportunity).
- Read the instructions from the sponsor, make a checklist of all required components of the proposal, including ancillary documents such as a Data Management and Sharing Plan and a biosketch.
- Contact relevant offices (e.g., Research Development Office) to facilitate external review of the proposal (if desired).
- Establish deadlines for writing major components.
- Begin drafting the proposal but don't worry about making the first draft perfect; it will change and the process is more efficient if you get feedback on ideas and concepts before worrying about wording.

Six weeks before the sponsor deadline

- Touch base with your departmental administrator/Division of Sponsored Programs (DSP) to let them know you are planning to submit a proposal.
  - Send the deadline, a link to the funding opportunity, and any other pertinent information.
  - Ask them about internal paperwork and internal deadlines.
  - Find out which documents can be submitted later than others.
- Reach out to those you'd like to ask to pre-review the proposal, including dates on which you'll send it to them and by which you'll need their feedback.

Three weeks before the sponsor deadline

- Assemble all the components needed for your application.
- Incorporate any feedback you received and compile your final draft.

The Research Services Fair (RSF) is a vendor-style fair that provides an opportunity for researchers and staff to learn about campus resources and services available for their research and scholarship activities. This year's RSF will host 65 campus units. Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be available throughout the event.
Register here by October 9. *Registration is required to attend.*

Write Winning Grant Proposals Seminar
October 26 | 8:30–5:00 pm | IMU Ballroom
The RDO is pleased to partner with Grant Writers' Seminars & Workshops (GWSW) on this seminar. Registration fee is $150 (includes seminar, workbook, supplemental materials, and lunch). Each college sponsors a certain number of faculty spots on a first come, first served basis. In-person and virtual options are available.
Additional information
Register here by October 8

Maximizing Pivot to Find Funding and Collaborators
August 28 |1:00–2:00 pm | Zoom
September 21 | 9:00–10:00 am | Zoom
Do you want to maximize your time spent searching for funding opportunities or potential project collaborators? Join us on an upcoming date below to learn how Pivot can save you time and effort in identifying the right funding opportunities for your research lines as well as identifying collaborators with the relevant expertise.
Additional information
Register here for the August 28 session
Register here for the September 21 session

Hardin Library Open Workshops
Hardin Library offers a variety of workshops to assist with your scholarly endevours. Workshop topics include Data Management Essentials, EndNote Basic, Finding the Right Journal for Your Manuscript, PubMed, and many others. All classes are free of charge but pre-registration is recommended. Group or one-on-one sessions can be scheduled for any classes.

One week before the deadline

- Upload (or have your administrator upload) your proposal into the routing form.
- Obtain a PDF image of your submission, proofread it, and correct any problems.
- Prepare final submission.

Good luck planning your next grant proposal!
Jennifer Barr and the SERCC editing team

P.S. Visit our table at the Research Services Fair!

Resources

- Robertson J, Russell S, Morrison D. The Grant Application Writers' Workbook, NIH version, 2021.
- AtKisson MS. Handbook for Planning and Writing Successful Grant Proposals: Approach/Research Plan. 2021.
- SERCC Recommended Timeline for Grant Proposals.
- NIAID: Timeline to Plan and Write Your Application

Additional information

"How to Win at DOE" with KB Science
September 19 | 9:00–11:00 am | UCC 1117 (In-person only)
This session will be an introduction to the Department of Energy (DOE) programing for all career levels, which will include tips for how to write to DOE grant programs, and information about the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS R&D and Science Act. This training will be given by Dr. Kristin Bennett from KB Science. Dr. Bennet has served in the DOE federal market space for over 30 years as a scientist, laboratory manager and federal director.
Register here

OVPR Resource Library: Learn from Successful Examples
Find examples of successful proposals to various funding agencies.
View *(Note: HawkID authentication required)*