Basic grant writing tips

Shayan Sharif
Pathobiology, OVC
“It’s a foolproof formula for writing grant applications.”
Types of grants

• Discovery driven grants (program versus project)
• Priority driven grants
• Industry partnership grants
• HQP grants (OCE, Mitacs, etc)
• Infrastructure grants
• Team grants
• Major national network grants
• International grants
Tip #1

Study, ask and understand the process

• Scope of the funding program
• Mandate, objectives and priorities of the program

Tip #2

Get a better sense of how your grant will be evaluated

• What are the selection criteria?
• Are there rubrics for reviewers?
• Be honest with yourself and critique your own grant (based on the agency’s selection criteria) as if your enemy has written it
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOVERY GRANTS MERIT INDICATORS</th>
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<td><strong>Excellence of the Researcher</strong></td>
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Tip #3

Do you know who will review your grant? If not, then you should!
• Contact the funding agency and ask!
• If you could, provide names of potential reviewers (ensure they are at arm’s length)
• In case of NSERC Discovery: 5 internal reviewers (readers) + 1-5 external reviewers (2-3 of whom are suggested by the applicant)

Tip #4

Talk (but don’t brag too much) about yourself
• Make your relevant information readily available to reviewers
• Make a table for your publications (number, journals, relevance to the field, impact, etc)
Tip #5

Talk about the environment
• Some agencies want to know if you have a suitable environment (infrastructure, personnel, etc) for conducting your proposed research

Tip #6

Talk about your students, post-docs, technicians (HQP)
• What have you done in the past?
• What are your plans for the future?
• How will you provide a nurturing environment for HQP growth and skills development?
Tip #7

Collaborate or die (same as publish or perish)!
• Most granting agencies want to know if the researcher is a lone wolf or a thriving collaborating researcher
• BUT, in some cases too much collaboration is not necessarily a recipe to success

Tip #8

Draw a clear and concise map of your proposed research
• Map out activities, budget and HQP
Tip #9

How can you make your proposal stand out among 50 other applications that the sleep-deprived reviewer has to review?!

• Remember that any given NSERC Evaluation Group member will spend around 1 hour to review a full proposal (including the most dreaded CCV)
• Also, remember that the Panel will only have 15 minutes to discuss a proposal
• The onus is always on the applicant to make things clear → no one will try to explain things or correct flaws on behalf of the applicant
Tip #10

Get help

• Get a colleague (internal or external), an industry partner (they bring a different perspective), or a student (good for their own development) to review
• Do you need a grant writer or someone to organize your team (for large team grants)?
• Do you need someone to go over your budget?
THE GRANT CYCLE

HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK:

WRITE GRANT → GET $ → DO RESEARCH → PUBLISH RESULTS

(REPEAT)

HOW IT REALLY WORKS:

DO RESEARCH → GET RESULTS BUT DON'T PUBLISH THEM YET. CALL THEM "PRELIMINARY RESULTS" → WRITE GRANT TO DO WHAT YOU ALREADY DID → GET $

USE $ TO PAY FOR AN UNRELATED NEW PROJECT

OK, NOW YOU CAN PUBLISH RESULTS

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