

# WRITING A GRANT PROPOSAL

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The ultimate goal of writing a grant proposal is to convince the reviewers that your project is better than the other projects they are reviewing. As such, it should be sure to convey the following:

- 1) **Sufficient background information to allow the reader to understand all facets of your project.**
- 2) **A clearly defined topic.** You need to convey to the reader the overall goal of your proposal. Underline this.
- 3) **Justification that this topic is worth studying.**
- 4) **Specific Aims.** Specific aims are a method of breaking your project down into smaller segments. Each aim should be designed to answer one question, or a small set of related questions.
- 5) **A purpose for each aim.** This is basically where you declare what you hope to learn, or what outcomes you hope to achieve for each aim. This is basically the rationale for doing this experiment. Convince the reviewers in a sentence or two that logic underlying your approach is sound.
- 6) **A plan for each aim.** You need to convince the reviewers that you have the knowledge and expertise to complete the aim. The trick with this section is to provide enough detail that it is apparent that you have really thought out HOW you will accomplish the aim without being too tedious. This is an area that you can often add or subtract information based on the overall length of the grant.
- 7) **Potential data determinations for each aim.** For each aim, you should briefly discuss the possible outcomes of the experiment and what each will indicate (success/failure, or what it says about your overall hypothesis)

To make the proposal easier to read and digest, it is recommended that you divide your proposal into sections. Some grants specify a format that you are required to follow. For an example, you might include the following sections:

- 1) Background and significance – Important information from the literature
- 2) Preliminary Data – Data you have collected. This will be a description of your mutants.
- 3) Specific Aims
- 4) Expected Results

Hints for writing a solid proposal.

- Don't write the background first. You need to be familiar with the literature, but don't write this part. Complete your specific aims first. You may not have as much space for background as you think. You'll also know better what you need to describe based on your aims.
- Use underlining and boldface type to highlight important ideas (so reader is easily drawn to the important stuff).
- Clearly delineate sections
- Have a clear understanding of what you want to do, how you're going to do it, and what outcomes you hope to achieve BEFORE you write.
- Assume the reader knows less than you about the material.