

The Basics of Proposal Writing I I

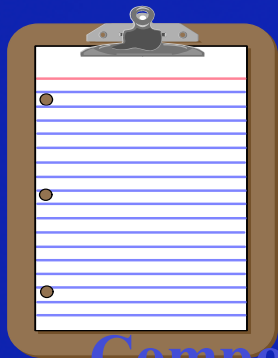
Developing Skills

Office of Grants and Research Services

Stephen Kelty, Associate Professor of Chemistry
Robert M. De Martino, Director, OGRS
Maribel Roman, Assistant Director, OGRS



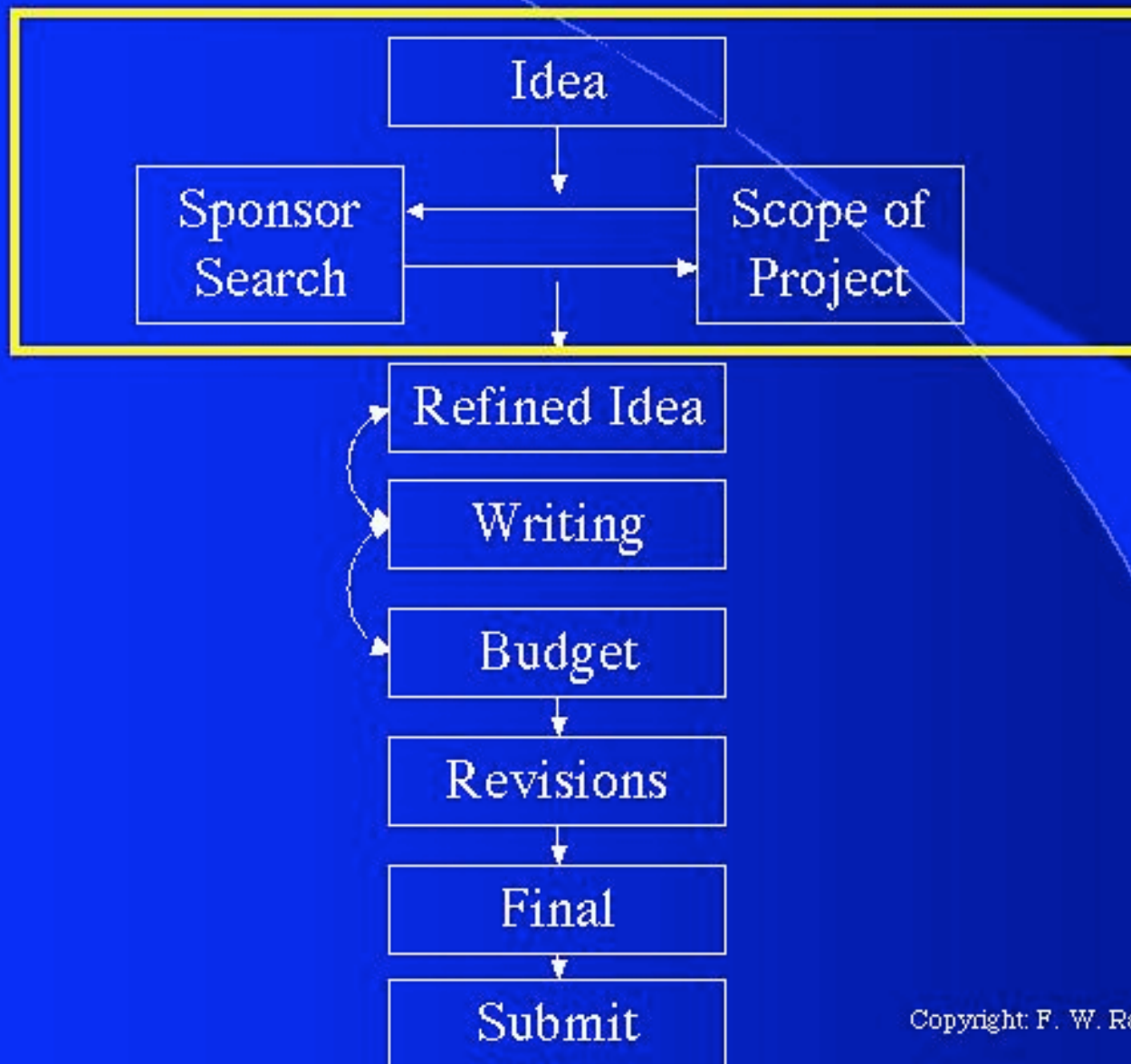
The Proposal



Components

- Abstract or Project Summary
- Title or Cover Page
- Introduction or Statement of Need
- Objectives/Outcomes
- Program Description/
Procedures
- Evaluation
- Dissemination
- Personnel
- Budget
- Appendices

Proposal Development



Suggestions for Developing Proposals:

- Before writing the proposal call the program officer.
- Before writing the proposal carefully consider the evaluation criteria presented in the RFP.
- Pay attention to details and follow the guidelines.
- Use the requested format and carefully proof read your proposal.
- Include all requested information.
- Make sure you are competing in the correct category and satisfy all eligibility requirements.

More Suggestions...

- Avoid technical jargon and assume that the proposal will be reviewed by experienced researchers who are not necessarily experts in your area of interest.
- Contact colleagues who have been funded and have them read your proposal draft.
- Present clear objectives and clear outcomes.
- Directly link evaluation to objectives.

Writing Tips

.....write for

- **Clarity = careful, consistent choices for diction, jargon, language, structure, organization.**
- **Comprehension = ease of understanding; helpful format; clear and simple visuals.**
- **Format = font size and style, white space, headings, emphasis, compliance.**
- **Coherence = makes sense, flows, is congruent with guidelines.**
- **Audience = sensitivity to physiological, psychological, esthetic effects of presentation.**

So What's Wrong?

.....common complaints stated by reviewers

- Did not follow the guidelines
- Not a compelling argument
- Inadequate evaluation
- Methodology weak and poorly described
- Not an appropriate proposal for sponsor (did not make a case)



Exercise: Corporate Grant Proposal

- What are the potential strengths and weaknesses of the proposal?
- How do you think a sponsor might react to this proposal?

Cluster (Nonlinear) Approach

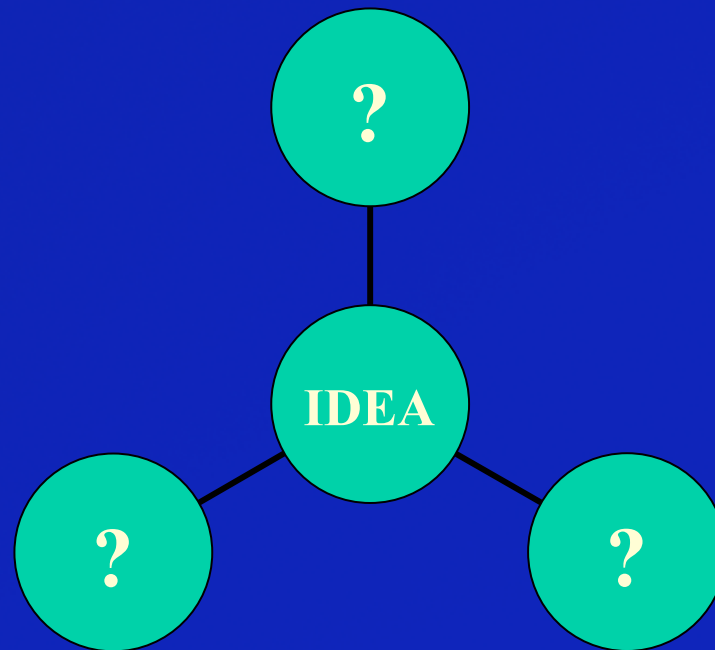
Two men were walking in the jungle in India. Suddenly, they came across a tiger that starting roaring. Both men were frightened, and one began to put on his shoes.

The other said, “How is this going to help? We can’t outrun the tiger.”

The first man replied, “I don’t have to outrun the tiger, I only have to outrun you.”

Non-linear thinking can save your life—and help you write a good proposal too!

Exercise: Cluster (Nonlinear) Approach



The Essentials of Productive Grant Writing

Writing Myths:

- 1. Writing must be perfect**
- 2. Writing must be spontaneous**
- 3. Writing must proceed quickly**

Effective Writing

Getting Started

- **Avoid binge writing**
- **Start writing and stop writing before you are ready**
- **Don't stop writing when you feel blocked**
- **Share your writing with colleagues**

Effective Writing

To Keep You Going

- **Create a sacred writing place**
- **Minimize distractions**
- **Plan beyond daily goals, but schedule reachable goals**
- **Keep a daily writing log**

Exercise: Focused Freewrite

- Pause just long enough to focus on what currently keeps you from writing proposals and getting grants
- Then, before you've had a chance to think it all out, begin writing spontaneously.
- Don't bother to outline. Don't struggle over form or correctness. Don't cross out. Just stick to your topic, and write as fast as you can.

Proposal Timeline

Preliminary work

(3-4 months before deadline)

- Check with granting institution for announcements
 - Solicited proposals
 - Unsolicited
 - In response to an RFP
 - Everything else

Proposal Timeline

Preparation

(1-2 months before deadline)

- Contact program officer
- Proposal planning
 - Deadline/target date (determines your timeline)
 - Formatting details (page limitations, margins, font size, etc....)
 - Special requirements

Proposal Timeline

Preparation

(1-2 months before deadline)

- Proposal writing

- Attention to detail

- Readability

- Precision

- Indicate clearly objectives

- Include a timeline for the project

Proposal Timeline

Preparation

(1-2 months before deadline)

- Proposal writing

- Budget

- Direct costs: don't sell yourself short

- Indirect costs (if allowed): pre-negotiated agreement with SHU vs. “standard model”

- Suggested reviewers

- Supplemental material

- Letters of support

Proposal Timeline

Preparation

(1-2 months before deadline)

- Budget considerations
 - Determine what you need to accomplish the goals of the project
 - Tangible needs (equipment, salaries, etc.)
 - Intangibles (e.g., time)

Submission

(at or ~before deadline)

- Deadlines are deadlines
- No penalty for early submissions but seldom an advantage

After Submission

- Check with program officer occasionally (or online info) for status (expect ~30% success rate)
- After the decision
 - Reviewer comments

Resubmission

(if needed)

- Make changes, updates
- Do not resubmit same proposal somewhere else

Thank you!



Questions?

Thinking Outside of the Box

