# **General Grant Writing: Tips and Tricks**

## Division of Research and Graduate Studies | Acadia University | 2018

GETTING STARTED

1. Ensure you have **the right competition** for your idea/project.
2. **Start early** to give yourself lots of time! Grant writing is an iterative process and involves multiple drafts.
3. **Read the instructions** to familiarize yourself with what’s expected from the application; print them off and keep them handy while you’re writing.
4. Do your research! **Review ALL available materials regarding the program/funder** (e.g. Peer Review Manual; evaluation criteria; “guiding principles” or objectives of a given program).
5. If available, look at multiple **examples of successful applications.**

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WRITING

1. Keep in mind: **proposals are not publications.** They are a tool for getting money and have no life beyond review​.
2. **Be explicit and up front with information.** At the beginning of your application, provide a clear, concise introduction to your project. At the beginning of each paragraph, put the most important sentence first.
3. A few words on LANGUAGE…
	1. **Simplicity is key** (now is not the time to get too creative or wordy)
	2. **Avoid jargon** and define any terms specific to your discipline
	3. **Don't be afraid to regurgitate to make a point clear**
4. Keep the instructions next to your computer while you write. **As you complete each section of the application, make sure you are following the instructions carefully** and giving the funder all information they ask for.

FORMATTING

1. **Consider the visual impression of your application.** Use white space effectivity. Think about font choices. Be strategic and consistent with your use of bolding.
2. **Use headings** to label and differentiate sections of text. Consider using the program’s Evaluation Criteria as your headings, helping reviewers to easily check boxes in relation to your application.
3. **Make links between the Objectives, the Methodology and the Budget** to ensure you’re conveying a cohesive and feasible project. One strategy is to construct a project timeline that references and connects each section of the application.

****ONCE YOU HAVE A DRAFT…

1. **Share it with others**. Reviews from colleagues both inside and outside of your discipline, as well as Research Administrators from RGS, are invaluable. Consider their feedback and make revisions accordingly.
2. **Re-read the instructions to ensure you’ve checked ALL boxes.**

THE BEST WAY TO LEARN?

1. By doing! **The more applications you write, the better you will become.**
2. **Consider sitting on evaluation committees** for internal or external funding competitions. By reading successful and unsuccessful applications, you will learn more about best practices and common pitfalls.

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