The Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa
Young Pharmacists' Group

PROFESSIONAL INNOVATION PROJECT 2023/2024

A) GRANT APPLICATION – POINTERS FOR APPLICANTS

When putting together an application for funding under any grant schemes, applicants must carefully consider the application guidelines provided and address all criteria on which the application will be assessed. The following questions should be considered when preparing an application to any research grants scheme:

- Have I/we answered the **"so what?"** question?
- Have I/we demonstrated the **research proposal's significance** - intellectual, technological, scientific, and strategic -?
- Have I/we clearly explained **why** I/we want to **do the research**; and why I am the best-qualified person (or we are the best people) to do it?
- Have I accounted for where this research proposal **fits in with what is known** and **where it will take us**?
- Have I/we shown how the **research plan links up with the clearly stated aims of the proposal**?
- Have I/we detailed **how the research project will be conducted**, using information presentation tools such as timelines or flowcharts?
- Have I/we listed **potential research outcomes** (publications, conference papers, external grants, etc.)?
- Have I/we indicated how the project will **contribute to the profession**?
- **Whom are you writing for**?

Make sure that your writing style is strategic and easy to understand (i.e., not filled with technical jargon and acronyms unless these are explained):

- Start with a clear statement of the research project;
- Capture the reader's imagination;
- Explain what gap in current research your project is going to fill;

Most importantly - test your proposal on an 'educated lay person' – if it doesn't make sense to them, you will need to re-write it until it does!

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B) <u>GRANT APPLICATION – TIPS FOR SUCCESS</u>

There are some general rules for success when you are writing a proposal for a grant. When developing your proposal, think of it not only as a research methodology which shows you have a clear and well-reasoned approach to investigating the problem but also as a:

- <u>Business plan</u>, showing your proposal represents a sound investment which will lead to a valuable and innovative research outcome; and a
- <u>Project plan</u>, showing you can manage the delivery of a worthwhile project, on time, on budget and within resources.

Ways to increase your prospects of success include:

- Pay close attention and comply with all the guidelines and requirements;
- **Excite!** convey enthusiasm, innovation and insight;
- **Influence:** think what will most influence those who will assess your proposal;
- **Establish credibility:** clearly explain your methodology and convincingly argue why it is the most effective approach;
- **Build confidence:** demonstrate track record, competence and connections; explain why you are best placed to deliver;
- **Differentiate:** show how your proposal is novel, unique, necessary, and timely or has greater scope for a good outcome.

1. <u>TITLE & SUMMARY</u>

The title of the project is vital. Ideally, it will:

- be short, crisp and eye-catching;
- use clear, straightforward English;
- capture the essence of the problem; and
- indicate how your research may explore or solve it.
- The summary is the first make-or-break test you'll face. It influences the reader favourably or unfavourably to the rest of your proposal: it highlights the significance of the issue or problem.
- Indicate the research is original or unique in its field; and
- explain how it will address the problem.

These three aspects need to be reflected in your title and summary:

- aims;
- significance and innovation; and
- outcomes.
- Always revise the title and summary after completing the full application!

2. <u>AIMS</u>

List your aims clearly. Explain:

- how your project advances knowledge in its field;
- the broad intent of the research;
- what you intend to do; and
- the expected outcome.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

Explain the impact of your research on "pharmaceutical world":

- explain how the research is original or innovative; and
- answer the questions "why are you doing it?" and "so what?

4. OUTCOMES

State what you expect the research to yield. Outcomes could be:

- a new technology;
- a new system or methodology; and
- an outcome of value to industry or society (specify the value).

5. GUIDELINES AND TIMELINES

Read application guidelines with care. Prepare a checklist and address them all. Take note of weightings, or point scores, given to different application parts. Give special attention to the parts with the highest score.

- Make sure that your research plan stacks up with the declared aim of the research –
  i.e., that you can deliver the promised outcome; and
- Explain how the research plan will work, using timelines and flowcharts. If possible, set deadlines.

6. WRITING STYLE

How well you write will influence the success of your project. A strong, clearly written, well-reasoned proposal is more likely to be funded than one which is complex, contorted andjargon-riddled.

- use good, plain English and check your grammar;
- use crisp, vigorous language that gives your proposal a feeling of dynamism;
- keep sentences short: one idea to a sentence;
- use short paragraphs;
- avoid complex sentence structures that confuse or bore;
- design the proposal to be read by a fast, busy reader who wants to grasp the main points easily;
- lay it out clearly: avoid huge slabs of text;
- impress the reader with clear thought and reasoning;
- avoid: adjectives, adverbs, acronyms and tautologies; and
- obtain feedback from a colleague.

7. IF YOU GET A KNOCK-BACK

Don't become discouraged. Even the best researchers aren't successful every time. Read the reviewer's reports, then put them away and ponder the general criticisms for a few days.
List each reviewer's points, most important first;

- talk to experienced colleagues about ways to improve your future prospects of
- success;
- ask for examples of successful proposals; and
- keep the reviewer's comments to help you improve future proposals.

Best of Luck!