

science proposals



how to get them funded

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1 FIND A KNOWLEDGE GAP



Be prepared for change.
You will have to think
and rethink your idea
several times.

Have you thought deeply?

Start by thinking beyond your immediate research area and dream about solving important problems. Then only adjust to reality.

Will your proposal change the world?

The knowledge gap must not just be a gap. It must be worth filling. Determine early on how your results would change the way researchers or clinicians progress in their work.

Does your proposal suits you?

Choose a knowledge gap for which you have unique expertise, but also that passionates you. If you are not convinced, you will not convince.

2 TEST YOUR IDEA

Does your idea pass the "so what" test ?

- Explain your project to intelligent and honest friends (or relatives)
- Encourage them to ask questions until they understand your enthusiasm for the project and why it is important
- Use their answers to write a less than 100 word summary of your project, including the knowledge gap you will fill, why it is worth filling and how your results will change the world

3 CHOOSE A FUNDER



If you are not in line
with what they are
looking for, it may not
be worth trying.

Have you chosen the most appropriate funder?

Before starting writing, make sure that your project fits in with the mission of the funding agency. Sometimes it is more strategic to apply to smaller funds as a stepping stone before applying to a highly competitive fund.

Is it adapted to the audience of your proposal?

Are you sending a proposal to the SNFS or to a local foundation? Align your proposal with the level of knowledge of the reviewers.

Have you studied the selection criteria?

Always double-check the guidelines and find out the weight of the different criteria. As most people do not do this, it will set you miles ahead.

4 MAKE IT COMPELLING

Do you stick to your idea throughout the proposal?

Stick to your 100-word summary throughout the proposal. Only include elements that fit with the gap of knowledge you want to fill.



Write your grant like everything you have done until now has led to the specific problem you are going to solve.

Do you show why they need to select you?

Show that other people are excited about what you have done so far in this field and that you have the unique experience to lead this project.

Do you demonstrate that your project is feasible?

Describe for example the equipment you have access, the experimental tools you master, and the collaborations you created. If you have preliminary data, it is even better.



Show, don't tell. Show things are impressive with numbers & precise examples. Otherwise it looks like you are making things up.

5 MAKE IT CLEAR



Do always use the same words when referring to the same concept.

Is there still some white space on the page?

Always respect page limits, but without crawling to the temptation to reduce margins, font sizes and spacing. Reviewers are smart, but busy people who are not necessarily interested. Make their job easy!

Can someone understand your proposal from its titles?

The title is your first impression. Make it clear and short. Ensure the whole application can be understood by the subheadings.

Is there any jargon or abbreviations that you can remove?

Write so any educated person can understand. Unless a term is used more than once in a single short section or used in every paragraph, do not abbreviate it.

6 CLEAN IT

Have you double-checked everything?

Always double-check your proposal. Do you refer to the right Figures? Is the font always the same? Have you removed all spelling mistakes?



Even Nobel Prize winners have some proposals rejected. Don't get desperate!

your bookmark checklist

Print, cut on the black line and fold on the dotted line, then keep close by.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> have you thought deeply?<input type="checkbox"/> will your proposal change the world?<input type="checkbox"/> does your proposal suits you?<input type="checkbox"/> does your idea pass the "so what" test?<input type="checkbox"/> have you chosen the most appropriate funder?<input type="checkbox"/> is it adapted to the audience of your proposal?<input type="checkbox"/> have you studied the selection criteria?<input type="checkbox"/> do you stick to your idea throughout the proposal?<input type="checkbox"/> do you show why they need to select you?<input type="checkbox"/> do you demonstrate that your project is feasible?<input type="checkbox"/> is there still some white space ?<input type="checkbox"/> can someone understand your proposal from its subtitles?<input type="checkbox"/> is there any jargon or abbreviations you can remove?<input type="checkbox"/> have you double-checked everything?	<p><i>"Grant writing is more than science."</i></p>
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