

How to write a grant and get it accepted

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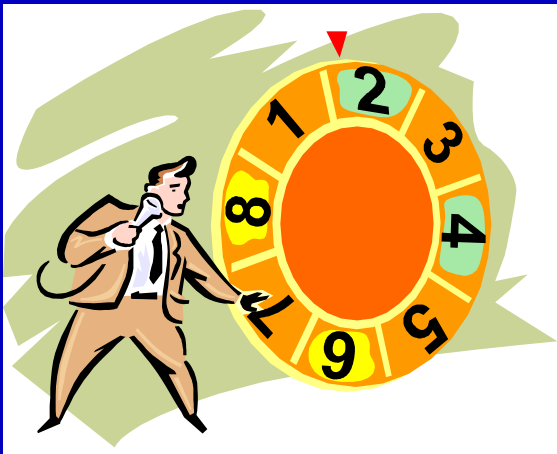
1. Introduction
2. Grant and fellowship structure in the UK
3. Some general principles for grant writing

What I should be talking about ..
“How not to write a grant and get
it rejected”

- ... but I have reviewed grants for national and international agencies and sat on and chaired grant committees.
- I've seen a lot of grants rejected!



The process



Types of grant

- Programme Grant – Generally 5 years. A substantive and complex piece of science.
- Project – Generally 3 years. Directed at a more focussed scientific goal.
- Studentships and Fellowships - Directed to PhDs for scientists and clinicians through to senior investigators.
- Wellcome Investigator Awards
- “Soft” award\money
- Special awards, initiatives etc

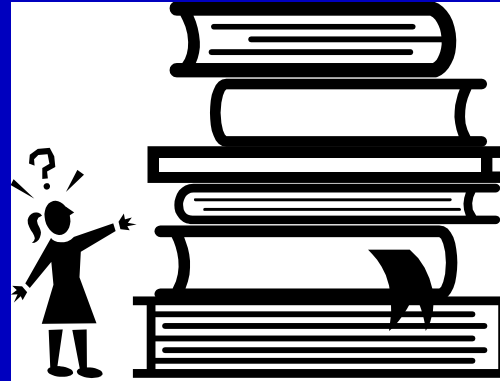


Agencies

- Medical Research Council – two page scientific proposal, interviews, competition across all clinical sciences, twice a year (20\call)
- Wellcome Trust – longer scientific proposal, interviews, open competition, three calls\year
- British Heart Foundation - longer scientific proposal, no interviews, no deadlines (committee meets 3-4 times per year)
- Heart Research UK – two fellowships\year. Capped at 150K.
- NIHR – patient focus, both full-time (doctoral RF) and P\T (academic CF).
- Academy of Medical Sciences

What they do with your grant

- Consult expert reviewers in the field who should have knowledge of the field.
- Considered by a committee. Usually assigned to at least two members. Quite often will not have detailed specialist insight.
- Interviews in some schemes. Again the interview panel can be quite broad e.g. across all clinical sciences.



The project



“The scholarly and clear
exposition of a good idea with
convincing preliminary data”

.....common pitfalls

Pitfall



- Read the regulations and call carefully
- Tailor your proposal to the call and funding agency
- Spend time and thought on the questions extraneous to the proposal e.g. How will the award benefit your career?
- If you aren't sure talk to the them

Pitfall

Structure the proposal

- Abstract
- Introduction – set the scene, why is the issue important, give specific details of the health burden
- Hypothesis - very important, specific
- Aims
- Experimental Plan
- Summary\likely impact



Pitfall



- Avoid being vague
- Make use of diagrams, flow charts etc
- Gantt charts for timeline
- Follow the guidelines for length, formatting, reference style
- Write in a direct style that will be comprehensible to the nonspecialist too
- Avoid too much jargon and acronyms

Pitfall



- Don't rush
- Don't do everything before the deadline
- Get colleagues to read and critique
- Polish and revise repeatedly
- Zero tolerance to errors

Tips for success



- Invest time and effort in an area that really interests you
- Work with a good mentor
- Read successful grants
- Collaborate and network

Websites

- www.mrc.ac.uk
- www.wellcome.ac.uk
- www.bhf.org.uk
- www.nihr.ac.uk
- www.heartresearch.org.uk

