

How to write a competitive research grant proposal and fellowship application

Content

Proposal writing is a fundamental component of modern-day science, in which a researcher proposes a line of research to a funding agency (or within a company) with the goal of securing the necessary resources to pursue the research. A successful proposal enables an individual researcher to direct and manage their own research and can provide additional benefits such as freedom to choose the institution where they conduct the research. Proposal writing occurs at all levels of academia and industry, from writing a travel grant application to applying for job positions or asking funding agencies to support your projects. Whilst the format and emphasis of a proposal can vary depending on the field and objectives, there are nevertheless basic rules that can be followed to greatly enhance the prospects of success.

This interactive workshop will describe the tips and tactics to ensure that your proposal is as competitive as possible. This includes how to effectively transfer ideas to paper by appreciating how proposals are read and evaluated. At the end of this workshop, you will have produced an outline of a proposal that adheres to SNSF guidelines (the format is similar for all major funding bodies), and which encapsulates the take-home messages of the workshop. The workshop is divided into three parts (one half-day each):

- 1) The proposal journey: from idea inception through to writing and submission
- 2) Understanding the organization of a proposal: current research, detailed research plan, etc.
- 3) Ancillary documentation for proposals (particularly fellowships): CV, research output etc.

Whether you are writing your first or tenth proposal, this workshop is aimed at junior and senior researchers alike. This workshop has a strong interactive component to develop transferable skills which are invaluable for communicating a message effectively within both academia and industry.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how proposals are constructed from start to finish
- Learn the techniques for effectively communicating your idea or vision in a scientific proposal
- Appreciate how proposals are reviewed, and how you can use this information to your benefit
- Avoid common mistakes that can preclude your proposal from the advanced review stages

Individual Feedback

During the course, you will extend the prerequisite one-page summary (see requirements below) into a 3-5 pages outline of a proposal using the standard SNSF proposal template. Due to the disciplinary nature of proposal writing we are unable to provide individual subject specific or detailed feedback on your proposal. However, we discuss and respond to general questions that arise during the writing process. For this reason, at the end of the workshop we encourage you to seek subject-specific feedback on your proposal outline from trusted colleagues in your field and/or liaise with a university grants office to finalize administrative details.

Instructor

Dan Bower, University of Bern and www.explainables.org

Target Audience

You wish to improve the clarity and effectiveness of your scientific proposals. You will be able to benefit from this course regardless of your field of research or the language required for scientific communication in your field.

<i>Language</i>	English
<i>Nr of Participants</i>	max. 15
<i>Dates</i>	April, 26 and May 03 & 08, 2024 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
<i>Location</i>	Main Building, Hochschulstrasse 4, room 104 (April 26, May 03), 117 (May 08)
<i>Recommended ECTS</i>	0,5 (15h workload)

Requirements

In advance of the workshop, think of an idea or scientific project that you would like to propose for funding and upload a 1page draft prior to the workshop (deadline: April 05, 2024 09:00 a.m.) here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bj2DwJvE6ifOzpl4UV_wyt9NWVWJwV_R?usp=share_link

Please upload a PDF file named as [surname]_[firstname].pdf. This will form the topic of the executive summary that you will write. You are strongly advised to bring a laptop or pen/paper since you will work incrementally on your proposal each week during the workshop. If a person does not hand in the draft the participation is cancelled and the place will be offered to someone on the waitlist.