Research Abstracts and Grant Writing: Basic Strategies for Success

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Objectives

• Describe the process of writing and refining research abstracts.

• Discuss basic steps for developing successful grant applications.
Abstract

• A brief summary of a presentation, research study, project, report, or book.

• Why are abstracts important?
Abstracts

• the first impression… and may be the only impression

• encourages the reader to want to know more

• An effective abstract will increase your chances of being accepted to speak, publish, or gain funding/resources.
Attributes of Great Abstracts

• Complete, but concise
• Appeals to the target audience or theme
• Interesting, hooks the reader with minimal words
• Clearly describes the concept with minimal jargon
• Doesn’t leap to conclusions
• Addresses the “so what”
• Rigorously adheres to the guidelines
Abstracts or Proposals: Start with a Great Idea

• Choose a topic that:
  – Addresses your passion and your expertise
  – Is consistent with your market niche
  – Is creative and innovative
  – Matches the speaking or funding opportunity
  – Addresses a need in practice, education, research, or leadership
Increasing Your Potential for Success

- Seize opportunities
- Start with local targets, before national venues
- Be prepared to invest time and energy
- Review previous winners
- Get very familiar with your target conference or agency and mirror their style and priorities
- Slant your subject matter to fit with topical themes and current events
- Be a brutal editor, eliminate all unnecessary words
Increasing Your Potential for Success

• Thoroughly review the literature, and use the most powerful data/references to support your points
• Invest in attention-grabbing titles and opening sentences
  – e.g. Young Onset Dementia: Life Interrupted
• Accept the process: draft, write, review, rewrite
• Develop a timeline and find a partner to hold you accountable
• Seek honest, open critique
• Don’t give up too quickly
The Idea

• Identify clear objectives for the project

• How will this project
  – provide new information
  – solve a problem
  – lead to significant improvements over the current situation

• What do you need to accomplish the project?
Funding Trajectory

- Establish Credibility
  - Clinical/Content Expertise
  - Presentations
  - Publications
  - Small Scale Funding – Intramural, Local
  - Completed Projects
  - Dissemination
  - Implementation
  - Progressive Funding
Background Information: Do Your Homework

• Published project abstracts
  – http://www.nursinglibrary.org/vhl/

• Funded proposals
  – http://projectreporter.nih.gov/reporter.cfm

• Thorough knowledge of the literature
Call for Abstracts or Proposals

• What are the guidelines and requirements for the call for abstracts or grant proposals?
  – General requirements
  – Specific requirements

• What are the evaluation criteria?
The Proposal

• A systematic description of why the project is important and your plan for completing it

• Build a strong, logical argument or case for why your project should be accepted and/or funded
  – Selling your idea to the reviewer/reader
  – Competitive edge
The Proposal

• Ask yourself the following questions
  – What is your research/project about?
  – Why is it important?
  – What are you planning to do?
  – What are the procedures required to accomplish your project goals/objectives?
  – What resources are needed?
  – How much will those resources cost?
  – Why are you the best person to lead and complete this project?
The Proposal: Common Components

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Aims/Objectives
- Background
- Significance
- Theoretical Foundation
- Review of Literature

- Methods/Plan
- Analysis
- Dissemination Plan
- Team Credentials
- Institutional Qualifications
- Budget and Justification
- References
- Appendices
Title

- Primary theme of your project
  - Technology for Education

- Not too long
  - Use of High Fidelity Simulation Technology to Improve Success Rates on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses

- Appropriate length
  - Use of Simulation Technology to Improve NCLEX-RN Success
Abstract

- Brief description of proposal
- Statement of significance
- Purpose of the project
- Brief description of methods
- Usually limited to 200-500 words
- Clear, concise, comprehensive summary
Introduction/Purpose

• General overview of main idea of the project
• Why is the project important/significant
• Provides some background information
• Cite key data/stats from reputable sources
  – national studies
  – reports from professional organizations
Aims/Objectives

• Serves as a succinct description of what you plan to accomplish.
• A brief description of the overall short- and long-term goals and the importance of the project.
• Include primary questions or hypotheses
• Then state the aims in measurable, time-oriented objectives.
• Numbering or bulleted the aims can help "walk the reader through the proposal."
Background/Significance

- Demonstrates the importance of the idea and project
- Why should this be important to the agency?
- This can also be included in the introduction rather than as a separate section
- Build a compelling argument as to why it is significant
Theoretical Foundation/Review of Literature

- Know the norms for the agency regarding theoretical framework
- Show how objectives and research questions are supported by the framework
- Link framework to the variables to be analyzed
- Comprehensive literature review
  - Timely, relevant, directly related
- Rationale for importance of research/project
- Preliminary work completed
Methods / Plan

• Detailed description of the logical steps of the project, a blueprint
• For a research study include:
  – Sample
  – Setting
  – Procedures, materials, data collection
  – Human subjects
  – Instruments/Validity and reliability
  – Assumptions/Study limitations
  – Time table for research activities
  – Statistical analysis plans
Dissemination Plan

• Systematic plan for dissemination of results
  – Presentations at national, international, conferences; professional meetings
  – Publication in professional journals
  – Posting on Virginia Henderson International Nursing Library
Biosketch / Credentials

- Why are you the most appropriate person to carry out the project?
  - Expertise
  - Resources
  - Prior work
  - Clear, logical, efficient plan

- The new NIH biosketch
Team Credentials

• Expertise of each member of the team
• Unique contributions each will bring to the project and why they are needed
Institutional Qualifications

• Institutional resources
  – Comprehensive library
  – Computer facilities
  – Research office
  – Access to subjects
  – Access to students
  – Funding record
Budget and Justification

• Resources required and costs
• Justification
  – Do not “pad” or inflate budget
  – Do not underestimate costs
  – Know what costs will be covered
  – Know the norms, re: salaries
  – Include personnel, supplies, equipment, travel, consultation – as allowed
References

- Listing of primary sources of information
  - In the required reference style, e.g. AMA or APA style
Appendices

- Supplemental information to any of the narrative sections
  - Human subject consent form
  - Copies of instruments
  - Letters of support
  - Biosketches of team members
Funding Sources to Consider

- Institutional Resources
- Professional Organizations
  - STTI, NLN
- Foundations
  - RWJ, Laerdal Foundation
- Government Agencies
  - HRSA, NIH
Sigma Theta Tau International Grants

- Small Grants
- Doris Bloch Research Award
- Rosemary Berkel Crisp Research Award
- Virginia Henderson Clinical Research Grant
- Joan K. Stout, RN, Research Grant
Sigma Theta Tau International Co-Sponsored Partner Grants

- Alpha Eta Collaborative Research Grant
- American Association of Critical Care Nurses Grant
- American Association of Diabetes Educators Grant
- American Nurses’ Foundation Grant
- Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
- Association of Perioperative Registered Nurses Grant
- Canadian Nurses’ Foundation Grant
- Council for the Advancement of Nursing Science
- Educational Assessment Nursing Research Grant
- Emergency Nurses Association Foundation Grant
Co-Sponsored Partner Grants

- Environment of Elder Care Nursing Research Grant
- Hospice and Palliative Nurses Foundation End of Life Nursing Care Research Grant
- Hill-Rom QI/Patient Safety Research Grant
- METI Simulation in Nursing Research Grant
- Midwest Nursing Research Society Research Grant
- National League for Nursing Grant
- Oncology Nursing Society Grant
- Rehabilitation Nursing Foundation Grant
- Southern Nursing Research Society Research Grant
- Western Institute of Nursing Research Grant
Sigma Theta Tau Grants Program

• More Info is available at:
  • [http://www.nursingsociety.org/Research/Grants/Pages/grantsbydate.aspx](http://www.nursingsociety.org/Research/Grants/Pages/grantsbydate.aspx)

• Or log on to the STTI home: [www.nursingsociety.org](http://www.nursingsociety.org) and select Research/Library on the left hand column