Research Abstracts, Proposals, and Grant Writing: Basics from Start to Finish

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At the Beginning: The Idea

- Choose a topic you are passionate about
- Choose a topic that addresses a need in practice, education, research, administration
- Be creative and innovative
- Choose an area where there are funding opportunities available
  - Small grants
  - Large grants
The Idea (Con’t)

▪ Have clear goals and objectives for the research/project

▪ Why will this research/project make a significant improvement over current “practice”

▪ What will you need to develop/what data will you need to collect/what materials will you need to acquire to meet your goals and objectives
Call for Abstracts, Proposals

- What are the guidelines/requirements for the call for research abstracts/grant proposals
  - General requirements
  - Specific requirements

- What are the evaluation criteria
The Proposal

- Document in which you systematically propose how you are going to carry out an idea
- Present a strong case for why your abstract should be accepted and/or proposal funded
  - “Selling your idea to the reviewer/reader
  - Competitive edge
Title

- Primary theme of your project
- Not too brief
  - “NCLEX-RN Education”
- Not too long
  - “A Program to Improve Success Rates on the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses Involving Group Review Classes, Individual Tutoring, and Staggered Assessment Testing”
- Appropriate length
  - “Student-Centered NCLEX-RN Preparation: A Program to Enhance Student Success”
Abstract

- Brief description of proposal
- Statement of purpose of research/project
- Brief description of research design or methods
- Usually word limit of 200-500 words
- Must be clear, concise, comprehensive
- Summary of entire project
Introduction/Purpose

- General overview of main idea of research/project
- Why is research/project important
- Provides some initial background information
- Cite data from sources, i.e. national/international studies/reports from professional organizations
Goals/Objectives

- **Goal**: Statement that reflects what will be accomplished as result of research/project; Broad statement
- **Objective**: Specific outcomes of program that can be evaluated either quantitatively or qualitatively or both; Measurable terms
- Can identify hypotheses to be tested if quantitative research study
- Template of what is to be accomplished by research/project
  - Specific Aims of project
Theoretical Foundation/ Review of Literature

- When writing a research proposal, critical to show objectives/research questions are supported by theoretical framework
  - Clear; linked to variables to be analyzed

- Comprehensive literature review
  - Timely; relevant; directly related

- Rationale for importance of research/project
Methodology/Research Plan

- Detailed description of logical steps of plan of grant; Blueprint of research study/project
- If research study, each aspect of research design must be described in detail in logical sequence
  - Overview
  - Sample/Setting
  - Procedures, materials, data collection
  - Human subjects
  - Instruments/Validity and reliability
  - Assumptions/Study limitations
  - Time table for research activities
  - Statistical analysis
Institutional Qualifications

- Institutional resources
  - Funding record
  - Comprehensive library
  - Computer facilities
  - Research office
Budget/Budget Justification

- Cost of project with explanations
  - Do not “pad” or inflate budget
  - Do not underestimate costs
  - Know what costs will be covered
  - Address areas such as personnel, supplies, equipment, travel, consultation
References

- Listing of primary sources of information
  - Use APA style unless otherwise stated
Appendices

- Supplemental information to any of the narrative sections
  - Human subject consent form
  - Copies of instruments
  - Letters of support
  - Biosketches of investigators
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For copy of PowerPoint presentation or assistance with brainstorming or writing grants

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