

Proposal Preparation Tips

#1: Comprehensively Review the Literature: What is already known? Where are the gaps?

How can you fill the gap(s)?

- In particular, review the past 6 months of literature
- Proposal reviewers will often look to the summary first, then the references. If the references are lacking, there is a problem

#2: It's a Competition: Have a Novel, Competitive Idea

- What is the important problem?
- How does it advance knowledge in the field?
- Is your project capable of making a difference?
- Is it understandable to others?

#3: Identify Funding Opportunities that Match your Expertise

- Take a look at what work has already been funded: don't repeat; look at who the sponsors of other, similar projects have been; read the abstracts of other projects the sponsor has funded

#4: Read the Guidelines CAREFULLY!

- Be sure to read all of the guidelines, not just the synopsis and/or announcement
- Note the required specifications (such as length, formatting, funding limits)
- Mark up the guidelines: What must you do? What should you do?
- Remember, the audience for whom you should be writing is educated readers outside of your field

#5: Read and Understand the Sponsor's Mission Statement and Review Process

- Help the sponsors accomplish their mission
- Keep in mind that missions can change, particularly with foundations

#6: Contact the Program Officer

- E-mail them with a concept and draft budget and ask questions. Can the idea be funded by their program? If not, what changes need to be made? Or, ask who else might fund it?
- Clarify any unclear information in the Request For Proposals (RFP)
- If the Program Officer is willing to review a draft proposal or specific aims, plan ahead

#7: Invite the Program Officer to Campus to Confer with Faculty

- Communicate to the GRI if you would like to invite the Program Officer to campus and we will communicate with the UCSB Office of Research (OR) to try to have an invitation extended

#8: Ask Colleagues and Those Outside of your Discipline to Review your Initial Idea and Proposal

- Go to those who have recently received funding for the first time, those who have done collaborations and those who have a history of successful proposals
- UCSB OR offers proposal development services such as proposal review. Build enough time into your proposal development schedule to utilize these resources
- Ask for brutal honesty
- Ask specific questions

#9: Write Clearly and Without Jargon

- Proposals are instruments of persuasion
- Remember that your audience will likely include educated readers not in your discipline
- Define acronyms and technical terms the first time they are used
- Build in enough time to review your work. Fix typos and add visuals such as charts & tables to break up the text

#10: If the project is not funded....

- Get feedback via the reviewers comments and work to revise and resubmit to the same, or perhaps a different, more appropriate sponsor

Determining your Proposal's Date of Submission to the Sponsor

Required Submission Method (per sponsor)	When it needs to be submitted to the sponsor
Award is non-federal and the submission date is for an electronic or a postmark deadline	Sponsor Deadline
Submission deadline is for the receipt of a hardcopy of the proposal	1 working day prior to Sponsor Deadline (the last Fed Ex pick-up on campus is 4pm)
Submission of proposal to a Federal Agency by UCSB OR via on-line systems	2 working days prior to Sponsor Deadline

Proposal Submission Time Line

GRI Contracts & Grants Office (GRI CG) submits a copy of the proposal to UCSB OR for review	3 working days prior to the date of submission to the sponsor*
PI submits proposal to GRI CG	4-5 working days prior to the date of submission to the sponsor*
PI notifies GRI CG of any subcontracts to be included in the proposal	10 working days prior to the date of submission to the sponsor*
PI notifies the GRI CG of their intent to submit a proposal	20 working days prior to the date of submission to the sponsor*

Remember, this reflects the date on which your proposal needs to be submitted to the sponsor as determined by the "Determining your Proposal's Date of Submission" table, not necessarily the sponsor deadline!