Twitter Thread by Olumuyiwa Igbalajobi, Ph.D



Olumuyiwa Igbalajobi, Ph.D
@olumuyiwaayo



Attaching a proposal to a cold email might also do the magic!

Ten tips for writing your research proposal

1. Follow the instructions!

Read and conform to all instructions found on the council website. Make sure that your proposal fits the criteria of the competition.

2. Break down your proposal into point form before writing your first draft.

Based on the total length of the proposal, decide whether you will have headings/subheadings and what they will be (e.g., Introduction, Background Material, Methodology, and so on).

These headings can be selected based on the advice given in the specific award instructions. For each section, lay out in point form what you will discuss.

3. Know your audience.

Describe your research proposal in non-technical terms.

Use clear, plain language and avoid jargon.

Make sure your proposal is free of typographic and grammatical errors.

Remember that, at every level, adjudication committees are multi-disciplinary and will include researchers in fields other than your own.

Therefore, follow the KIS principle – Keep It Simple!

Reviewers like it that way.

4. Make an impact in the first few sentences.

Reviewers are very busy people. You must grab their attention and excite them about your project from the very beginning. Make it easy for them to understand (and thus fund) your proposal.

Show how your research is innovative and valuable. Remember, too, to show your enthusiasm for your project—enthusiasm is contagious!

Organize your proposal so that it is tight, well-integrated, and makes a point,focused on a central question (e.g.,“I am looking at this to show.)

Depending on the discipline, a tight proposal is often best achieved by having a clear hypothesis or research objective and by structuring the research proposal in terms of an important problem to be solved or fascinating question to be answered.

Make sure to include the ways in which you intend to approach the solution.

5. Have a clear title.

It is important that the title of your project is understandable to the general public, reflects the goal of the study, and attracts interest.

6. Emphasize multidisciplinary aspects of the proposal, if applicable.

7. Show that your research is feasible.
Demonstrate that you are competent to conduct the research and have chosen the best research or scholarly environment in which to achieve your goals.

8. Clearly indicate how your research or scholarship will make a “contribution to knowledge” or address an important question in your field.

9. Get the proposal reviewed and commented on by others.

Get feedback and edit. Then edit some more. And get more feedback. The more diverse opinion and criticism you receive on your proposal the better suited it will be for a multi-disciplinary audience.

10. Remember that nothing is set in stone.

Your research proposal is not a binding document; it is a proposal. It is well understood by all concerned that the research you end up pursuing may be different from that in your proposal.

Instead of treating your proposal as a final, binding document, think of it as a flexible way to plan an exciting (but feasible) project that you would like to pursue.

Good luck!

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