

STUDENT
AFFAIRS
IRELAND



Developing Successful Funding Proposals

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What will we cover in the next 30 minutes?

What makes a grant application **complete**?

Moving a good application into a **great** application?

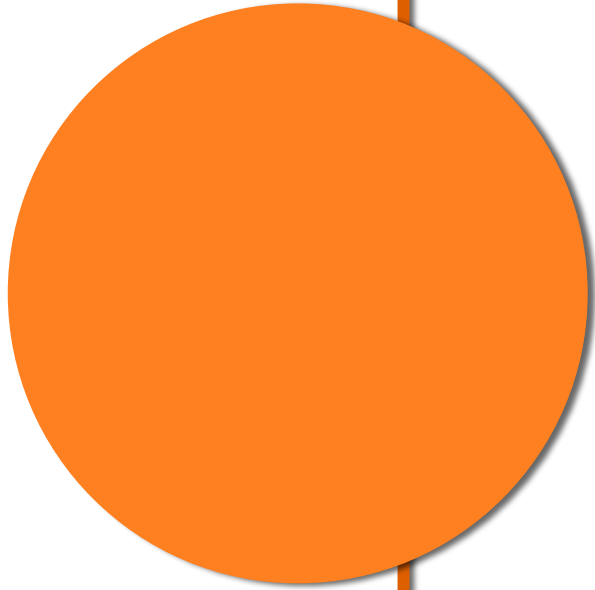




Your thoughts...

What makes a GOOD application for funding GREAT?

What differentiates a 'meh, ok' application with 'wow why haven't we found this project to fund sooner'?



Completing an application

Step 1: Ticking all the boxes



Completing a grant application

Part 1: The basics

1 Do you meet all eligibility requirements?

Just because there's money on offer does not mean that your application shouldn't be tailored. Avoid 'sure let's throw it in' mentality

Seed funding = a small amount to 'kick start' a project/group

Project funding = usually a time-bound fund to support specific activities

Research funding = supports research efforts to generate new knowledge

Operational funding = covers day-to-day costs (e.g. running of an organization)

2 Do you know how the application will be evaluated?

To meet the basic criteria of the grant application, understanding how and who will evaluate it is key!

Are their weighted questions?

Are specialists reviewing? Do you know their language/lingo?

Is there a particular problem that the evaluation team is looking to solve / enhance a practice?

Does your application 'match' previous funded projects? Is it in the same zone? If not, elaborate!

What is your story?

Part 2: Your narrative is key

1 What is your NEED?

Why is your request important and necessary?

Why hasn't this project been funded before?

Perhaps the need is new

Cross-institutional and a 3rd party funder is appropriate (e.g. SAI, HEA, etc)

Something has changed (e.g. new unit/additional staff, etc) and now is the right time

2 What will change?

So what??

Clearly articulate the how something/process/system will improve once funded.

e.g. EngageAll Community of Practice project: multi-institutional, need based on timing, 3rd party funding gives the excuse (not just a UCD/ATU idea so must be good)



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Moving from 'meh' to great!

Beyond simply answering the
questions.....

How will funder benefit?

It is not just about you, your project or your idea!

What is your funder's mission?

Does your application
'speak' to their membership?

Vision/strategy?

Plans for growth/influence?

What's in it for them?

How will they gain?

Is funding you/your project
going to make them look
good?

There have to be 2 winners
here: the funders and the
funded!



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Elevating your application to stand out

Getting an easy 'yes' to your application

- Clear, plain English wins the money!

Avoid heavy jargon, too many abbreviations and lingo which is only understood by 'insiders'

- Be mindful of AI

While AI is helpful for getting started, AI written applications are often overly generic and will rank 'meh' rather than 'excellent'.

...and then what?

What is the sustainability of your ask?

Not about plants or the environment, but longevity!



1 What happens when the money runs out?

Tip: For seed funding in particular, monies are to be used to 'kick start' something that has a life after funding cycle ceases

What is the vision? What are range plans? Are these do-able?
How will the funder benefit? What is in it for them?

2 Contingency planning

What if things don't go to plan? Give your funders confidence that you have considered the 'what ifs' and how you are going to mitigate for the avoidable or unpredictable

- Is your institution able to co-fund in case of overspend?
- What is your Plan A and Plan B should something come in the way (institutions, people, systems/processes) – be sure to clarify how this is a trusted 'fool proof' application
- Be realistic – don't raise the eyebrows of those deciding on your application!



Before you submit your application

Part 3: Check, check and re-check!

1 Seek internal feedback

Ask colleagues, who aren't also applying, in your unit, institution or field (SAI!) to review what you have written. Even better – seek a proof-read from someone completely unfamiliar with the topic

- Do THEY understand the ask?
- Would THEY give you the money?
- Where is clarity needed
- Overall readability

Note: Trusted colleagues want you to succeed

2 Did you answer all questions?

It is critical that all questions are not only answered but that you have pre-empted additional questions.

e.g.: We will conduct a survey with male students as part of the project – VERSUS –

We will survey male students as this group has been previously found to be more difficult to retain thus



We don't win them all.....

Part 3: Take stock and don't lose heart

- Seek feedback from the funding organization

This is hard – and not personal!

What scored well/highly?

What was missing?

What surprised you?

- What next for your proposal?

You/group have put in significant time in writing this application – do you re-submit elsewhere? Perhaps do a presentation/workshop/poster to gain feedback (and try again?) Perhaps you let it go (for now)



Thank you!

Good luck!