

GRANT READINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Definition of grant readiness – Having the necessary preparation, qualifications, training, expertise, networks, resources, infrastructure, organization, time, attitude and perspective to develop and carry out the proposed project.

Goal: Turn readiness issues into solutions, which then translates to grant and professional success.

REVIEWING YOUR IDEA

1. Is your research agenda in an area about which you are passionate and would enthusiastically spend the next three to five years working?
2. Is your research agenda sufficiently distinct from that of your graduate advisor to enable you to establish an independent career?
3. Is your research area or project in an exciting, vigorous, high-impact area of scholarship (rather than an area that has already been well-researched, where most progress is incremental)?

DETERMINING FIT

4. Do you know your department's expectations regarding external research funding?
5. Does your project advance the funding agency's goals? Is your project right for the funding program?
6. Have you researched the funding agency for which you are preparing the proposal?
7. Have you reviewed the strategic investment plans, research roadmaps, reports, and workshop results of the agencies you are targeting for funding?
8. Have you obtained and analyzed background information on the target funding agency to determine whether or not the research idea is a good match for the agency?

RESEARCH POSITIONING

9. Has the funding agency already funded a research project that is identical or very similar to the project you are proposing?
10. Is your research agenda in an area that is currently funded by agencies or foundations, or is it likely to be funded soon?
11. Have you determined which projects an agency has funded at comparable institutions?
12. Have you contacted principal investigators of funded projects to (1) discuss their project and proposal strategies and (2) request copies of their proposals and reviewers' comments?
13. Have you identified and contacted the agency's program officer to discuss the research idea?
14. Have you discussed your idea with colleagues who have been successful in obtaining funding from the target agency or who have served on review panels?
15. Do you know what other scholars are doing in your field and can you address how your work complements or is different from theirs?
16. Is your project a tight fit with the institution's priorities?

ASSESS YOUR RESOURCES & INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

17. Have you identified resources on campus to help you develop a competitive proposal?
18. Do you have access to institutional data on research environment, infrastructure, facilities, alumni, student achievement, etc.?
19. Do you have the resources required to conduct the proposed project (e.g. infrastructure, equipment, facilities, start-up funds, consultants, research environment, administrative support)?

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR QUALIFICATIONS

20. Do you possess the necessary education, qualifications, training, expertise and resources to carry out the proposed project?
21. Are you up to date on the existing scholarship in your field?
22. Do the quantity and quality of preliminary data indicate that the proposed project is likely to be successful?
23. Do you have a strong publication record that supports your chosen research area or in a closely related area? Have you published in the last 5 years?
24. Do you maintain active connections to scholarly communities beyond your home campus?
25. Have you attended/presented at national conferences?
26. Have you served on a grant review panel?

COLLEAGUES AND CONNECTIONS

27. Do you have connections with neighboring community colleges, high schools, local industry, local museums, research labs, R1 institutions, underserved populations that could be used to enhance your proposed project?
28. Do you have connections to your former graduate advisor, postdoctoral advisor, or colleagues who could contribute technical expertise to your project?
29. Have you developed a network of reputable contacts in your field who can serve as references and/or suggested reviewers?
30. Have you introduced yourself to researchers outside of your own institution in your field who are well-funded?
31. Have you identified on or off campus colleagues who know that you are pursuing grant funding and writing a proposal? Do people know what you are doing?
32. Do you have a number of credible reviewers able to positively critique your proposal?
33. Is the Timing Right?
34. Have you established a 3- to 5-year research agenda, one that includes publishing and attending conferences in your field?
35. Is the proposal appropriate for this point in your academic career?
36. Is the proposal a logical next step for you, building on previous research, teaching responsibilities, and professional goals?
37. Is there enough time to prepare an application and/or collect the necessary preliminary data or institutional information before the deadline? Is there enough time for internal review?

ATTITUDE

38. Are you willing to find a trusted source who will skewer and disagree with what you are doing?
39. Are you willing to develop a relationship with the program officer at the funding agency?
40. Are you ready to be cheerfully persistent in your pursuit of information, connections, etc.?
41. When a funding agency decides not to fund your proposal, are you willing to look on it as a learning process, take reviewers' comments to heart? Will you ask your colleagues to read your reviews and give you feedback?
42. Are you in it for the long term? Are you willing to submit multiple times or to multiple agencies?
43. Are you willing to take risks and expose yourself to the probability of criticism from your peers?
44. Do you have the courage to fail?