

CABTRAC

Grants and Grantsmanship: A Quick Overview

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Grant Sections

- Specific Aims

} One Page

- Candidate
- Research Strategy
 - Significance
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - Responsible Conduct of Research

} Twelve Pages

Specific Aims Page

- THE most important page in the grant!
- The only page that other reviewers at the table may read
- Should be written at a *Scientific American* level
- Use short declarative sentences
- Do not include references, jargon or acronyms!
- Clearly state the hypothesis (bolding can be helpful)
- Be sure the aims test the hypothesis
- Should not be technology driven
- Interdependent, not dependent

Specific Aims Page: Structure

- One to two paragraphs of introduction
- “Sprinkle in” a little preliminary data
- Funnel concept to the hypothesis
- Clearly state the hypothesis and aims
- Inclusion of rationale and/or research design

Candidate Section

- Tell the story of your training path
- The “why” not the “what” you did
- Include information not included in your biosketch
- Sell yourself

Preparing a “Training Program”

- Select mentors and/or an advisory committee
- Self identify deficiencies in your training.
 - Address with workshops and courses
 - Use the grant to augment your training
- Indicate how the grant will maximize your chances of becoming an independent investigator

Research Strategy

- **Significance**
- **Innovation**
- **Approach**
 - **Preliminary Studies**
 - **Materials and Methods**
 - **Results and Discussion**
 - **Similar to all the parts of a manuscript**

Significance and Innovation Sections

- Not a literature review
- Leads the reader to the hypothesis (clearly stated)
- Demonstrates the “conversation” in the field
- Use short declarative sentences
- Clearly state the hypothesis (bolding can be helpful)
- Be sure the aims test the hypothesis
- Demonstrates a critical question is being asked and (hopefully) answered
- Everything is focused on the hypothesis
- Should be innovative. If very innovative, **MUST** have preliminary data to show that study is feasible

Approach

- Should show PI's contribution to work
- Should show feasibility of experiments
- Can be structured relative to each aim
- Must be “doable” in requested period of funding
- Must be hypothesis-based, not technology driven
- Must NOT be descriptive... No “Fishing expeditions”
- Must be FOCUSED. Not a multi-aim proposal to conquer the world
- Include controls!
- Include a section on statistics
- Must discuss potential pitfalls and propose alternatives

Fatal Flaws

- **Big Picture**
 - Lack of relevant significance
 - No innovation
 - Not hypothesis driven
 - Poor writing quality
- **Experimental Approach**
 - Overly ambitious
 - Too narrow
 - Dependence on success of preceding aims
 - Lack of preliminary data and demonstrated reagents
 - Lack of sufficient detail and statistical analyses
 - Lack of anticipated results and alternative strategies

Thoughts on Review

- Busy people with full time jobs
- Be considerate of their time
- Make their job as easy as possible
- Provide them the information they need for writing their review
 - Importance of subsections

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Thank You!

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