Writing an Effective Research Funding Proposal

PROPOSAL ESSAY (3-5 pages, single spaced)

Proposal essay should contain (need not be in this order):

- Topic/questions
- Background
- Methods/plan
- Timeline
- Skills
- Funding & budget
- Communication/dissemination
- Impact

**Topic/questions**

- Summarize your work crisply and effectively; convey that this is an interesting and necessary project.
- What are your research questions?

**Background**

- Demonstrate how your work engages with the existing literature, scholarship, professional best practices, or creative conversations.
- Show what is already known, how your project fits in, and how it will move the research or creative area further along.
- Include some citations to key references (use the style of your discipline).
- Justify that the topic warrants the work you want to do.

**Methods/plan**

- Discuss your project plan with steps from data gathering to analysis to expected final product.
- Provide ample detail about your reasoning for your methodology or approach. Why have you chosen specific methods, artistic mediums, or theoretical approaches?
- How will this process allow you to answer your research questions or drive your creative activity? Is the scope manageable?
- Include a detailed plan of work for proposed activity
  - Specificity is key - leave no doubt in the reviewer’s mind that this project is feasible on the proposed timeline.

If your project includes any of the following elements, make sure you address these clearly in your methods/plan section:
Human Subject Research & IRB

- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is designated to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in research conducted at or sponsored by an institution.
- If your proposed project includes interviewing people, sending a survey or questionnaire, conducting clinical tests, or collecting biospecimens or other medical data you may need IRB approval.
- You must address plans for the IRB process in your proposal and integrate the process (which can take from 6-8 weeks) into the timeline.
- What results do you anticipate the human subject research will provide?
- Please contact SOURCE Student Research Mentor Simone Bellot (sabello@sy.edu) with questions regarding IRB process and approval as you compose your project proposal.

Travel

- Proposed conference travel should include the conference titles, dates, and locations, if known. If you are tentatively including conference travel, list a few potential conferences. Conference travel funds are primarily intended for students to present at the conference.
- Proposed research travel must have a solid plan and you should justify the travel as a means to get specific information or results that cannot be obtained through other methods.
- You must address the feasibility and likelihood of finding the data you need through the travel; do initial outreach with potential contacts at the location to ensure that resources will be available to you on your proposed timeline. Create a draft itinerary.
  - If traveling to meet with or interview people, name contacts that have agreed to meet with or guide you. Address IRB if you will be interviewing people.
  - If traveling to an institution, museum, or archive, confirm that they will have the resources you need on the timeline you propose.
  - If you are traveling to a place in a culture different from your own, include reflection on how you will ethically and responsibly engage with the people and places there. Include steps you have taken to learn about the culture and/or prior experiences that have equipped you with the knowledge necessary to effectively engage with the study population.

Team Projects

- Discuss the roles and contributions of each team member.

Timeline

- This can be a brief bulleted list describing when you plan to complete the stages of the project.
- Don’t bury information here that should be in the methods/plan section.
- Make sure that you and your mentor have discussed the feasibility of your timeline.

Skills

- Describe your preparation and necessary skills or a plan to learn the skills that you need. May include prior research and/or examples of previous work.

Funding & Budget

- Be specific about how the funding will advance the project. You will submit your budget on the provided template; you should also include a brief section in the proposal summarizing how you will use the funding.
  - For supplies / materials / participant compensation
• Give a strong rationale as to why you need these items and what results you anticipate they will provide. When requesting durable equipment over $100, please confirm that you cannot borrow or use the item from your school, college, department, or the library.
  – For conference fees or travel
    • Give a strong rationale and likelihood of your poster or presentation being accepted.
  – For research travel
    • Demonstrate a strong likelihood of finding the information you need.
  – For student payroll or summer stipend
    • Demonstrate how you will effectively use the time this will allow.

**Communication/dissemination**

• How will you share your work and contribute to the ongoing research/creative conversation in and/or beyond your field of study?
  – Campus presentation is required as part of SOURCE and Honors Grants.
  – Off-campus presentation or publication? Film festival submissions? Website or exhibition?

**Impact**

• Describe the potential impact of your project on the University community and/or the broader world, and your plans for public dissemination of your work.
• Discuss how the project will benefit your academic experience and impact your career goals.

**Additional tips:**

• Write with persuasion, energy, and enthusiasm. Style and tone will differ depending on the student and field.
• Make your argument and leave the reviewer thinking, “Yes, this project needs to happen.”
• No need for a fancy cover page, or “dear reviewer” or “thank you committee.”
• Include any images, graphs, or links to prior work in the page limit
• You may use subtitles or subheadings if you’d like.
• Properly cite all references in the style of your discipline.
• Submit all your documents as PDFs
• Perhaps most importantly... get feedback and be prepared to write several drafts of the narrative.

**BUDGET**

Please use the budget template provided in the application. We expect that you will make efforts to use your resources wisely. Budget expenditures may include:

• Supplies, materials, consumables (major equipment will need to be returned to the SOURCE, Honors, or your department)
• Participant compensation *(with IRB approval only)* - small payments to human subjects
• Payment for services (transcription, editing, etc.)
• Virtual conference presentation fees
• Publication fees (submitting to a journal, exhibition, or film festival)
• Academic year payroll (for SOURCE academic year grants only; the project may not be tied to an academic requirement or receiving academic credit)
• Summer living expenses (for summer grants only)
• Travel costs (food, lodging, transportation, museum or archive fees)
• Miscellaneous (describe expense)

We understand that this budget may change as your project evolves, and you will submit a revised budget post-award.
FACULTY MENTOR RECOMMENDATION FORM (mentor will submit)

After you submit the Intent to Apply, your mentor will also receive an email with the link to the recommendation form and a copy of your intent to apply. You won’t see their response. Provide your mentor with draft copies of your proposal and budget well in advance of the deadline; the recommendation form is due on the deadline. The form includes:

- Assessment of the academic strength and significance of the proposed project relative to the student’s research experience
- Discussion of the student’s skills and academic preparation for the proposed project
- Confirmation of the feasibility of the project and timeline
- A statement noting their agreement to serve in this capacity for the proposed project, including a comment as to their availability to serve as the faculty mentor during the proposed project timeline.

RESUME

Maximum 2 pages; upload as PDF. For team projects: Team Leads will prompt the team members to email their resumes and transcripts to ugresearch@syr.edu

UNIVERSITY TRANSCRIPT

Students may submit an unofficial copy of their transcript available on MySlice. For team projects: Team Leads will prompt the team members to email their resumes and transcripts to ugresearch@syr.edu

Apply for SOURCE & Honors Program Funding in Fall 2022:

Apply for SOURCE Academic Year Grants (up to $3000) for Spring 2023, SOURCE Summer Grants (up to $3000) for 2023, SOURCE Academic Year + Summer Grant (up to $7500) for Spring + Summer 2023, and Honors Program Awards (up to $5000-7500).

Deadlines

Intent to Apply (required) - September 29, 2022
Complete Application - October 13, 2022

Timeline and budget may include:
- Spring 2023 only (up to $5000)
- Summer 2023 only (up to $3000)
- Spring + Summer 2023 (up to $4500 for Spring + up to $3000 for Summer)

https://research.syr.edu/source/for-students/source-funding-opportunities/
https://honors.syr.edu/thesis/funding/#funding_about

The SOURCE | 238 Bird Library | 315-443-2091 | ugresearch@syr.edu
research.syr.edu/source