

Advice from EPSRC on Grant Proposal Writing

Andrew Clark

Associate Programme Manager for Medical
Engineering and Ageing Research
Healthcare Sector Team Leader

01793 444186

andrew.clark@epsrc.ac.uk

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Any
Questions?

Responsive v. Targeted Mode

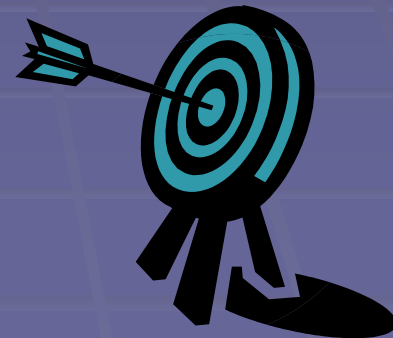
Responsive Mode

- Open call for anything in EPSRC Remit
- Includes networks, overseas travel grants, first grants
- Typically six month decision date



Targeted Mode

- Particular calls with closing dates
- Usually a tight thematic/activity remit
- Often multiple stage, with outlines, workshops, interviews



Relevant EPSRC Programmes

- Engineering – Annette Bramley
- Economy, Environment & Crime – Peter Hedges
- Information & Communications Technology – John Hand
- Life Sciences Interface – Kedar Pandya

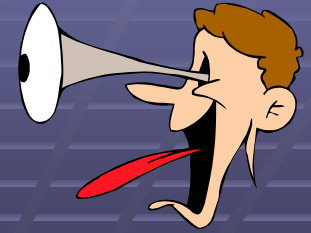
Things to Know about Panels

- Panels provide a rank ordering of the submitted proposals, which are then funded to the limits of available finance
- Panels are asked to rank on the basis of referee comments and applicant response – and not to “re-referee”
- You can look up previous panels on the website
- Most likely panels for work here are Healthcare & Socio-technical Systems

Common Issues in Proposal Submission

- Wow! (Ambitious but not too ambitious)
- Managed v. Responsive Mode
- Research Council Remit
- JeS & Finances
- Multi-disciplinarity
- User Collaboration
- The Imperfections of Peer Review

Wow!



- Excite the referees, make them want to see the research done
- Do it early, don't save the twist to the end like a detective novel
- Have a great question and a methodology that makes referees as confident as they can be
- Don't be over ambitious – don't claim to solve the whole discipline with one three year RA

Managed v. Responsive Mode

- Don't be a managed mode junkie
- If going for a managed call, then make sure strong fit to call, don't go fishing
- Early stages of a managed call are massively competitive (sometimes 7:1) so don't always expect great feedback/clear reasons for not being selected
- Responsive mode is where most of the money is ...

Research Council Remit

- Research Council Remit is a complex business, especially these days, with quite a few anomalies
- Any council will lead on a proposal the largest part of which is in its remit and seek advice and funding from others
- If in any doubt, ask about remit before submission – emailed 2 page outline normally enough, saves wasting time later

JeS and Finances

- Applications (except for a few targeted mode expressions of interest) must come via the JeS system
- Must be approved by university office, which must be taken into account on closing dates
- Funding Guide gives details on eligible expenses, although if in doubt ask
- Proposal must include a justification of resources, explaining for each resource requested (including staff time) its role in the project.

Multi-disciplinarity

- Multi-disciplinarity is normal business for research councils
- Multi-disciplinary peer review is tricky, but by and large the system usually works quite well.
- We will typically send proposal to a referee in each relevant discipline/interface
- Make sure someone from each relevant discipline has looked at the proposal

User Collaboration

- No hard and fast rule (except very occasionally in targeted calls)
- Don't push for money if in-kind is more appropriate
- Get appropriate collaboration for the project
- Concentrate on quality of collaboration not quantity

The Imperfections of Peer Review

- Don't expect an answer in less than six months
- Reply to referees is very important – keep calm, and remember the referee usually isn't a moron.
- Peer Review is Fair and Expert – but often wrong.
- If you don't feel it has been fair and expert, then do complain. If just wrong, then wait for later vindication!
- Resubmission often works, but reacting to referee comments helps.

Notable Opportunities

- First Grants
 - Now no cost limit
 - 3 years from first academic post
- Advanced Research Fellowships
- Challenging Engineering
- New Dynamics of Ageing
- For the longer term:
 - Next Generation Healthcare

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