

Proposal Writing and OGM Post-award Processes

NOVEMBER 10, 2022

Introductions

- ▶ Nicole Neitzey, James Madison University
CISR/Adjunct Professor in Political Science
- ▶ Omed Zawity, AUK Office of Grants
Management

Today's Objectives

- ▶ Understand the purpose of a proposal
- ▶ Recognize what sponsors look for in proposals and how best to respond to proposal requests
- ▶ Give an overview of what elements make up a proposal
- ▶ Learn some tips for successful proposals
- ▶ Find out how AUK's Office of Grants Management can support your proposal development, submission, and grant management
- ▶ Understand internal policies and sponsor guidelines to be aware of, forms to be used in this process

Phases of Grant Funding

- ▶ Pre-award
- ▶ Award
- ▶ Post-award
- ▶ Closeout

What is the purpose of a proposal?

- ▶ Provide justification for the funding you are requesting
- ▶ Persuade your audience (i.e., sponsor) that your organization will put funds to good use
- ▶ Demonstrate that you can follow the funder's guidelines
- ▶ Serves as a detailed project plan so that if you are awarded funding, you have a roadmap to follow

Preparing to Write Your Proposal

1. Read the entire request for proposals (RFP)
2. Follow submission guidelines **to the letter!**
3. Know what activities will be before budgeting
4. Plan your time – work backwards from deadline
 - ▶ Reach out to OGM right away when you plan to apply
 - ▶ Leave plenty of time for submission – OGM needs your proposal 10 days before the deadline

Preparing a Proposal

Common proposal sections:

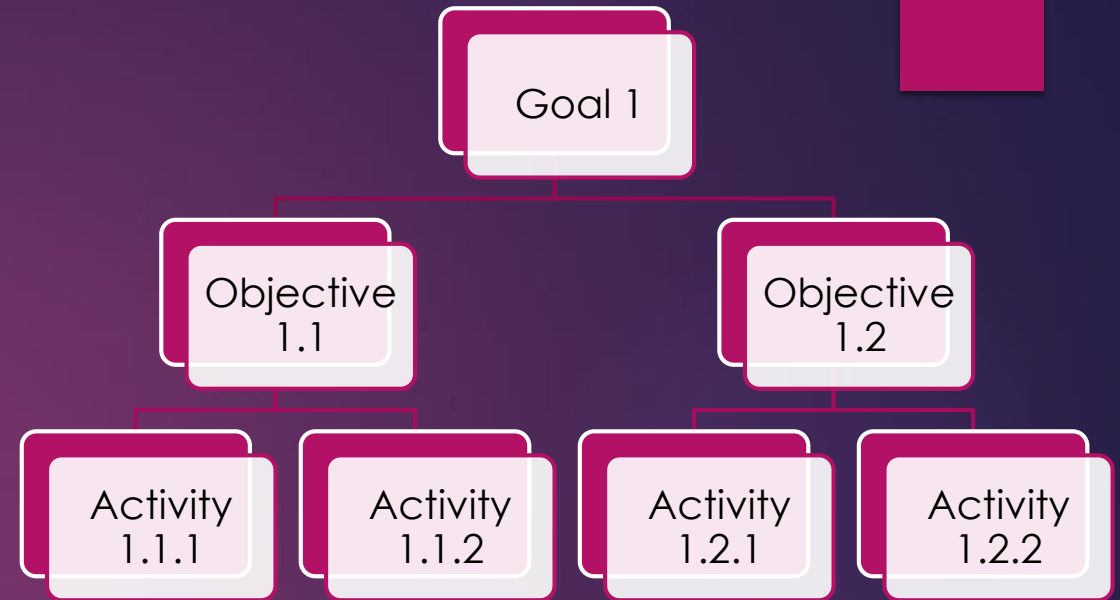
- ▶ Executive Summary
- ▶ Problem or needs statement (or “research question”)
- ▶ Project goals and objectives
- ▶ Project activities/methods
- ▶ Staffing needs / qualifications
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation plan
- ▶ Budget
- ▶ Annexes/Appendices

Research Question/Problem Statement

- ▶ Addresses the questions of what problem exists that your project/research will address and who benefits
- ▶ Ensure the issue being addressed connects with the sponsor's interests and your area of expertise
- ▶ Needs to be supported by data
 - ▶ Best to use both quantitative and qualitative
 - ▶ Use graphics to illustrate where possible
- ▶ This section can be seen as a literature review
- ▶ Generally written from broad to specific
- ▶ Will help you articulate the overall impact you expect the project/research to have

Goals are

- ▶ Ambitious
- ▶ Aspirational
- ▶ Broad
- ▶ Long-term
- ▶ Representative of an ideal
- ▶ Sometimes not realized by the end of the project



It is common for proposals to have only one or two goals with multiple objectives under each

Objectives

- ▶ Help you determine if you are meeting your goals (steps you will take toward achieving overall goals)
- ▶ Your project objectives should be SMART:
 - ▶ Specific (include numbers where possible)
 - ▶ Measurable (you can demonstrate you have achieved it at the end)
 - ▶ Attainable (realistic with the resources and time you have outlined)
 - ▶ Relevant (related to overall goal)
 - ▶ Time-bound (specifies how long will it take)
- ▶ Make sure your goals and objectives tie back to problem statement

Methods/Activities

- ▶ Explain how you will achieve your objectives
- ▶ Are crucial to define in order to develop budget (tie to resources)
- ▶ Should include data to support their use (provide rationale for using them)
- ▶ Covers tasks, personnel, resources, and timeframe

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

- ▶ How will you measure success? Some possible examples:
 - ▶ What did your project accomplish?
 - ▶ How many people were impacted and how?
 - ▶ What overall difference did your project make/what contribution did you make to the field with your research?
- ▶ What data do you need to gather in order to know if you are making progress?
- ▶ How will you gather your data? (surveys, scientific measurement, observation, e.g.)
- ▶ Some sponsors have a specific format to follow for this section – either way, OGM can help you develop this plan
- ▶ How will you report on success to the sponsor (need to consider for when it comes time to submit progress reports to them)

Budget

- ▶ What is it?
 - ▶ A best guess of costs associated with your project, based on solid research
 - ▶ A plan or roadmap for how you will spend money on project activities
- ▶ What information does OGM need from you to develop?
 - ▶ What are your planned activities?
 - ▶ What do you need to purchase (based on budget categories: personnel, travel, supplies/equipment, contracts [i.e., external partners], other)
 - ▶ Describe in as much detail as possible / provide justification (will need for budget narrative document)

Tips for Successful Proposals

Some keys to successful proposals are

- ▶ Documenting an unmet community need or unexplored area of research that the grantseeker is in a position to address
- ▶ Researching funders, competitors, and potential partners thoroughly
 - ▶ Find funders whose focus overlaps with your areas of interest
 - ▶ Identify your advantage over your competitors – “unique selling point”
 - ▶ Find partners who can complement your skillsets and experience
- ▶ Building strong relationships with funders and partners
- ▶ Targeting proposals carefully
- ▶ Adhere to guidelines from the grantor
- ▶ Writing a concise proposal tailored to the funder

Tips for Successful Proposals - cont

Some keys to successful proposals are

- ▶ Grab their attention early – your executive summary or introduction should be compelling
- ▶ Use language similar to that of the funder to show that you understand the topic from their perspective
- ▶ Strike a balance between showing you have expertise and not using too much jargon or subject-specific language
- ▶ Developing a clear plan for the program/research
- ▶ Be able to carry out the project as proposed – don't overpromise
- ▶ Give extra time and attention to proposal sections worth the most points
- ▶ Put yourself in the shoes of the reviewer – or have a colleague review your proposal critically for feedback
- ▶ Watch a sample review process for scientific papers:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzBhKeR6VIE>

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award



Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

- ▶ Award budget and financial management
- ▶ Narrative and Financial Reporting
- ▶ Sub-awards
- ▶ Award expenses
- ▶ Time and Effort Reporting
- ▶ Record Retention
- ▶ Close-Out

For federal funds, the uniform guidance can be found in [2 CFR 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1) - <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1>

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

Budget Categories:

Personnel, Travel (domestic or international), Equipment (unit cost >\$5,000 + useful life > 1 year), Supplies (unit cost <\$5,000), Contractual, Other direct costs, Indirect costs. **(See budget example)**

OGM assistance:

Proposal stage

- ▶ OGM will assist the PI to create the budget (1. What are your planned activities? What do you need to purchase (based on budget categories: personnel, travel, supplies/equipment, contracts [i.e., external partners], other) 3. Describe in as much detail as possible / provide justification as this is needed for the budget narrative document)

Post-award

- ▶ Allowability
- ▶ Monitoring actual expenditures vs budget
- ▶ Financial Reporting and invoicing

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

Reporting requirements

Periodic performance and financial reports. These should include:

- ▶ A comparison of the actual accomplishments to the objectives for the period
- ▶ The reason why goals were not met
- ▶ All the supportive documentation that support the activities stated in the narrative report and expenditures

PI responsibility:

- ▶ Narrative reports are to be prepared by the PI and people involved in the project.
- ▶ PI needs to keep a close eye on the scope of work, the objectives and activities (also stated in M&E).
- ▶ Keep oversight on the sub-recipients and contractors that need to send their reports according to the sub-award agreement and met their periodical objectives.

OGM assistance:

- ▶ Prior to submission to the sponsor, the OGM reviews all the reports.
- ▶ Combines all the reports together.
- ▶ Create and submit the financial reports and relevant forms such as the SF270 and SF425 for federal grants.
- ▶ Current process for federal funds: The reports are finally reviewed by the president and being submitted together via SAMS.
 - ▶ Federal grants: Done through SAMS Domestic (portal) on quarterly basis
 - ▶ Other funders: Depends on what has been agreed upon

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

Sub-awards

PI responsibility:

- ▶ Regular meetings to make sure they meet their objectives and follow their scope of work
- ▶ Double check the sub-awardee invoices with the OGM, to see if everything is stated on their, i.e. the sub-award agreement number, period of performance, etc.

OGM assistance:

- ▶ Will also conduct quarterly meetings with the PI and personnel involved.
- ▶ Do all the other communication with the sub-awardee, such as sponsor guidelines in regard to sub-awardees, sending out reminders, developing the agreements, doing checks on sub-awardee invoices etc.

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

Award expenses

- ▶ Before taking any action that would result in an outlay of expenditures, you should do the following:
 1. Contact and communicate with the OGM to make sure the expenditures are allowable.
 2. Fill out the “University Prior Approval Form” (**see form**)
 3. Send it to the OGM
 4. After approval, contact finance for the AUK policies and procedures. I.e. procurement needs to follow the AUK procurement policy.

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

TIME AND EFFORT REPORTING

- ▶ Why do we need it?
- ▶ According to AUK Grants Management Policies and Procedures, the certification form needs to be signed within 30 days after end of reporting period.

PI responsibility:

- ▶ Make sure all the personnel involved fill out the timesheet.

OGM assistance:

- ▶ Send the form to all the people involved in the award
- ▶ Explain the time and effort reporting sheet
- ▶ Assist the personnel involved with filling out the form

See example time-sheet

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

RECORD RETENTION

Records retention or documents retention refers to the preservation of critical documents that reflect decisions, policies, financial transactions, and internal controls.

Why is this important?

- ▶ We need to keep documentation for audit purposes.
- ▶ We need to keep documentation for sponsor request.

For federal funds, AUK has to keep their documentation for at least 5 years. Therefore, we do that for all of our awards to keep one standard.

- ▶ What is the PI's responsibility? Ensure all files are prepared for storage and archived at the end of the grant life cycle.
- ▶ What is the OGM's responsibility? OGM will notify the PI to store all their documents. Also, the OGM will archive the records for at least 5 years for requests from sponsors or external auditors.

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award / Close-Out

CLOSE-OUT

When a sponsored project nears its end, the OGM and PI work together to ensure the award is closed out properly.

- ▶ Close-Out period starts when the award ends. All the stakeholders have two months after the end of the award to send all of their documentation and invoices. For sub-awardees, this is the end of their sub-award.
- ▶ All the personnel involved in the project have to send their final narrative reports, including all the supportive documentation and the relevant forms, such as the equipment list (if applicable)
- ▶ The sub-awardees have to send their narrative and financial reports, final invoice marked with “final invoice” and the sub-awardee certification form.

PI responsibility:

- ▶ Make sure that everybody sends their reports and final invoices
- ▶ Fill the Close-Out checklist form with the OGM (**see the form**)

OGM responsibility:

- ▶ Send out email notifications to all stakeholders with relevant forms, such as the sub-awardee certification form and equipment list.
- ▶ Assist the PI with all the narrative final reports.
- ▶ Develop the final financial report.
- ▶ Submission of all the relevant documentation to the sponsor.

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

Uniform guidance, Procedures and relevant forms

Uniform guidance:

- ▶ Federal Grants – We follow 2 CFR 200
- ▶ Other grants – Other rules and regulations that need to be followed. Provided by sponsor or on their website. I.e. Erasmus has Erasmus programme guide.

AUK's policy and procedures:

- ▶ Procurement
- ▶ Travel
- ▶ Inventory Management
- ▶ Scholarships

Forms:

- ▶ University Prior Approval Form (PI and other personnel involved in award)
- ▶ Close-Out checklist for PI
- ▶ Overall Equipment List for PI

Office of Grants Management

Post-Award

To summarize..

PI responsibilities during post-award (including the close-out):

- ▶ Project oversight and communication with the people involved in the project and sub-awardees
- ▶ Time and effort reporting
- ▶ Record retention
- ▶ Create narrative reports
- ▶ Equipment inventory
- ▶ Follow the internal procedures and fill out the necessary forms

OGM responsibilities during post-award (including the close-out):

- ▶ Preparing, maintain the budget, request for amendments or extensions
- ▶ Review and submission of narrative reports with relevant forms
- ▶ Creating and submission of financial reports with relevant forms
- ▶ Communication with all stakeholders, including the sponsors
- ▶ Assist the PI and other personnel with every aspect of the post-award, such as budgeting, time and effort reporting, award expenses and invoicing, record retention, equipment inventory requirements, close-out requirements etc.

AUK's Office of Grants Management

- ▶ Contact details:
- ▶ Office of Grants Management
Director: Omed Zawity
Email: omed.zawity@auk.edu.krd

We're here to help!

- ▶ link of the survey will be sent to you by email after this workshop

Questions?

Please type your questions into the chat box

Additional Resources:

- ▶ Carr, Cynthia E. *The Nuts and Bolts of Grant Writing*. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2014.
- ▶ O'Neal -McElrath, Tori. *Jossey-Bass Nonprofit Guidebook Series: Winning Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing and Writing Successful Proposals (5th Edition)*. Somerset, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, 2019.