WRITING FUNDING APPLICATIONS IN ENGLISH

Course Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

This course, designed for researchers and programme developers seeking third-party funding, deals with three central aspects of grant proposal writing: **concepts**, **rhetoric** and **language**.

The course helps you to strengthen the **concepts** within your project. To think about your project from the perspective of the grant funding body and to plan and structure your ideas in a meaningful and valuable way.

To effectively convey these concepts to the funding body, you need to master the relevant **rhetorical** structures - those concerned with highlighting the importance of your project, or of convincing the reader of your competence and ability.

Both concepts and rhetoric are bound by **language**. Whether technical terminology relating to project management, or phrases for expressing cause, effect and solution, or strong grammatical forms to describe the long-term future impacts of your project activities - effective use of English will help you to   get your message across confidently, competently and with greater success.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

On completing this course you will:

- Have a solid understanding of the qualities of a good, well-written grant application for research or programme funding.

- Be able to use effective rhetorical structures appropriately throughout your grant applications.

- Be better able to conceptualise and formulate relevant, meaningful and persuasive problem statements.

- Be able to describe the goals and objectives of your project idea in a logical and cohesive manner.

- Be able to describe and promote yourself and your team in a persuasive manner.

- Be better able to plan and describe the long-term impacts of your project and how you intend to achieve them.

- Have a sound knowledge of project management terminology, especially in the context of applying for European Union grant funding.

Course Breakdown

This course uses blended learning methodology, with a combination of face-to-face, group activities together with worksheets and reflection tasks for individual study.

Participants should bring laptops or tablets to the seminar and be prepared to share their writing in an online course forum.

After completing the course, participants can submit draft proposal summaries and will receive direct and specific feedback and suggestions.

UNIT	CONCEPTS	SKILLS	LANGUAGE
Unit 1: Introduction to Grant Writing	What makes a good grant proposal?	Drafting project summaries	General style of grant writing
Unit 2: Genre and Rhetoric of Grant Writing	Grant writing as a promotional genre	Editing project summaries	Rhetorical moves and key phrases
INDEPENDENT WRITING ACTIVITIES #1			
Unit 3: Solving a Problem and Creating Value.	Grant writing as problem solving	Identifying problems and highlighting value	Cause, effect, failure, prevention, and importance
Unit 4: Setting Goals and Objectives	How to structure goals and objectives logically	Preparing logical frameworks and describing goals	Expressions of action and success; strong verbs
INDEPENDENT WRITING ACTIVITIES #2			
Unit 5: Why You?	Identifying and highlighting skills and competences	Drafting a competence and mission statement	Promotional and emphatic language
Unit 6: Creating an Impact	Identifying potential impacts	Stakeholder analysis and impact planning	Future predictions and long-term expectations
Unit 7: Project Management	Importance of being a good project manager	Work Breakdown Structures (WBS) and risk assessment	Technical terminology of project management
SUBMISSION OF DRAFT PROPOSAL SUMMARY / FEEDBACK			

Thinking about your project idea

If you have an idea for a project, now is a good opportunity to brainstorm some of your ideas and try to answer some of these essential questions.

Start to forumlate some basic ideas - these will really help your thinking (and your writing) later on in the course.

What are the main goals and objectives of the project?

What is the field of research?

What can you learn from the existing literature?

Why do grant applications fail?

Grant proposals may fail because they do not match the funding body goals. If the grant writer doesn't understand the focus or the priorities of the grant of the funding body, then they may end up submitting applications that do not fit with the requirements of the call. They may even select the wrong grant opportunity completely. You need to fully understand these requirements, and make sure that you can align your project goals with the priorities of the funding body. Look at what other types of projects or organizations that have been supported by the funding body. What did they do? What reports are available?

Grant proposals may fail because they are poorly planned and poorly organized. The grant writer may not have collected the relevant information, may not have built a suitable team or allocated work appropriately, may not have developed a realistic timeline or budget, or may have failed to provide measurable and achievable goals and objectives.

Grant proposals may fail because they are incoherent and lack direction. The grant writer needs to organize his or her thoughts clearly and consistently, ensuring that all essential information is included while avoiding unnecessary details. The language needs to be strong and concise. The content needs to be logical and easy to follow.

Grant proposals may fail because they are not convincing. The grant writer needs to be able to persuade the reader that the project is important, that the goals, objectives and methods are relevant, that the approach is innovative and that the project team is competent and experienced. People read – and listen – with their hearts as well as their heads. We need to be presented with factual information that appeals to our minds. This factual information needs to be presented in a persuasive manner that appeals to our emotions.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Align your project ideas with the funding priorities.

Think about the planning and organisation of your projects.

Work on the structure and coherence of your grant writing.

Use persuasive, emphatic language for high-impact writing.

Likes and Dislikes: Project Summaries

You will review a collection of project summaries from successful project applications from the European Union Horizon 2020 programme. You'll find the selected summaries in your module resource pack.

Read in order to write.

When developing writing skills, it's important to read as much of the target material as possible. Therefore, you should really just try to read and analyse as many of these summaries as you can.

Identify two or three summaries that you like - just based on your first impressions - as well as two or three that you don't like much.

Or you could try taking a selection of 5 summaries and ranking them from best to worst.

Ask yourself why.

What were the criteria that influenced your decision? Use the table below - or your own notebook - to note down those factors that you liked and those that you didn't like and try to consider what makes you feel like that.

Share your thoughts in the course forum.

GOOD PRACTICE HABITS

Get into the habit of highlighting any useful words or phrases that you think you could use in your own applications.

Pay particular attention to any strong or persuasive language.

Things I liked	Things I didn't like

Example project description

The following text is adapted from research by Conner and Upton (2004) who examined the rhetorical structure of grant proposals.This example, which is from a grant proposal looking to raise money for outdoor equipment for a children's home, contains a lot of rhetorical functions. As you are reading the example, try to answer the questions on the left.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What are the general, core beliefs or basic assumptions that underpin the project?

What do we know about the mission, skills and experience of the applicant?

What specific problem or gap is the project trying to solve?

What is the end goal of the project? What long-term change will the project achieve?

What concrete benefits will this project achieve for the target population?

What specific methods or investments are involved?

Why is this project important? Why should the funding body prioritise it?

Pleasant Run Children's Homes was established in 1867 to care for children orphaned by the Civil War. The founders believed the need would be a temporary one, and in time, every child would have a safe, nurturing and happy home to live in.

Although more than a hundred and twenty years have passed and the needs that Pleasant Run addresses have changed, that hope remains alive that in time, all children will have the loving, supportive homes they deserve.

Today, Pleasant Run is a not-for-profit agency that serves seriously troubled children who have been abused and neglected. Our clients are referred by county welfare caseworkers or probation officers, by state special-education officials or by parents in cooperation with health-insurance providers. Regardless of how these children come to us, our objective is to help them become healthy, happy, contributing members of society.

One of Pleasant Run Children's Homes programs is treating children ages 7-18 in one of our 5 group homes. It is in this setting that children are provided a homelike environment while providing structure and supervision to help stabilize their behaviour and lives.
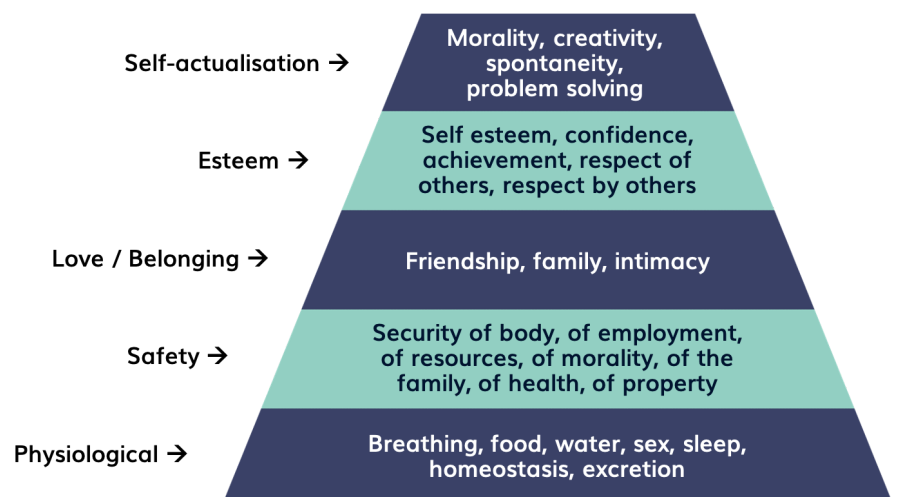
Project Work as Value Creation

The essential point of any project is to create some value – intellectual value, economic value or social value. Value occurs when there is some improvement to an existing situation. In short, when there is a problem to solve.

This is why 'problem statements' are so important in applying for grant funding. We need to know what the problem is that this funding will help to solve.

In grant writing, however, we need to consider more than just the question of how to write about problems. Often, we need to understand what these problems are in the first place.

As grant writers, our starting point is often the problems that interest us. We feel a burning personal or intellectual desire to investigate a certain phenomenon or to establish a new tool or programme. But on reflection we must realise that these are very much personal motivations for creating personal value.

Looking at Maslow's hierarchy of needs we might see that a project idea inspires us because of our need for esteem, for acknowledgement and recognition – particularly in academic contexts, where the rule is "publish or perish". We may feel inspired because the project idea is self-actualizing. It helps us to be creative and solve problems.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Maslow's hierarchy of needs outlines what it is that human beings require to achieve fulfilment at various levels.

More importantly, It shows us the basic things that we put value on - the things that provide value to us.

It tells us that food is valuable to us when we are hungry. Security is valuable to us when we feel under threat. Friendship and belonging is valuable to us when we are lonely and isolated.

These things are valuable to us because we are programmed to seek them out. We feel their urgency and are unfulfilled without them.

Self-actualisation → Morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving

Esteem → Self esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others

Love / Belonging → Friendship, family, intimacy

Safety → Security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property

Physiological → Breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion

Using the language of cause and effect

The following exercise reviews a variety of typical cause and effect phrases. These are useful when describing the problems that your project will solve.

In each section, fill the gap with the correct expression. You can check your answers in the answer key.

owing to	consequences of	reason for	ensued

1. Interest in the field _____ when the concepts were popularised through film.
2. Analysing sentiment is challenging _____ the use of multilingual constructs.
3. High ticket prices are potentially the _____ low participation.
4. What are the _____ perceiving and labelling pupils in certain ways?

so as not to	result in	on the grounds that	due to

5. Any undue pressure may _____ emotional distress for school pupils.
6. Non-car owners may view cultural activities as non-essential _____ the relatively high cost of alternative transport.
7. Researchers should understand these issues _____ weaken their results.
8. They may be refused _____ they did not meet the admission criteria.

affect	with the aim of	on account of	in order to

9. Social media has characteristics that _____ its ability to influence voting.
10. The government has already agreed a climate package _____ reaching the country's 2030 emission reduction targets.
11. The interviews need to be transcribed verbatim and their contents thematically organised _____ identify recurring themes.
12 Universities have been studied extensively _____ good data availability.

prompted	as a consequence of	effects	lead to

13. A bad choice could _____ an uncertain future.
14. Young people's knowledge about the harmful _____ of smoking is considerably higher than it was 20 years ago.
15. These challenges have _____ researchers to revisit long-held assumptions.
16. We observe economic and social changes which might be taking place _____ colonial domination and exploitation.