

All proposals do similar work in terms of purpose: they present an idea that needs some type of support to be successful. Therefore, it is up to the proposal writer to provide a clearly articulated argument to persuade a potential donor or granting institution to support your idea.

THE NARRATIVE

What is your project about? Tell the story behind the project. This is where you show the granting institution how you came up with the idea. Use specific examples here, if possible.

Why does your project matter? Once you tell the story, show your institution why it matters. What kind of work does your project do? Who does it effect? What body of research does it add to or question? You might consider bringing in scholarship here to support your argument for the project.

How does your project fit the grant requirements? Be familiar with the requirements of the grant proposal. If they want to fund creative works, be ready to define how your project is creative. This might take some creativity yourself.

What is the abstract? The abstract is a basic summary of your project. It highlights the key points of your project. It's a good idea to write this last because you will have worked through all the other parts of the proposal and can more easily summarize the points. Abstracts are usually short and to the point because people read over them quickly to see if they want to invest in reading the details of the project.

THE LOGISTICS

What is your documentation method?

This talks about how you are recording your data. Will you use a video recorder? Photos? Voice? Consider how you want to present your material to the public. That will help guide you.

What is you anticipated budget? Outline all the details regarding what you need to purchase and the cost. If you are not sure, estimate. Amazon or Google are examples of viable estimation tools, but in other cases -- such as scientific research -- you might need to ask your advisor for assistance.

How will you assess your project? Tell your potential donor how you will know if your project worked. This may be through a survey at the end or through multiple surveys or check-ins throughout the project. There are many different ways to assess projects, so consider asking your advisor for viable assessment tools for your particular project.

OTHER DOCUMENTATION

Do you need a letter of recommendation? If you need a letter of reference or an advisor approval. If this is the case, make sure to ask at least two weeks in advance to give them enough time to write the letter. Also, provide as much documentation about your proposal as possible. It is recommended when you ask for the recommendation letter to also send them the Call For Proposals, your resume/cv, and your drafted out proposal. This way they will have enough information to write a solid letter.

Do you need a resume or CV? It is important for granting institutions to see that you have the experience and knowledge to undertake what you want to do. Basically, they want to know if you are credible enough for them to invest in your project. A CV/resume allows the institution to see a summary of your experiences that support your interests and education.

Do you need a signature sheet? The cover sheet, or signature sheet, is required in some cases to show acknowledgements and approvals regarding the project proposal.

Do you need IRB approval? If you are working with human subjects, you will need approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). There are different approvals you need if working with animals, so do your research carefully and be sure to adhere to deadlines. Boards sometimes meet only once a month, so make sure to start early and do your research.

CHECKLIST: BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

- ✓ Make sure you have every piece of the proposal completed.
- ✓ Proofread.
- ✓ Proofread again.
- ✓ Ask your advisor to provide feedback.
- ✓ Take it to the Debby Ellis Writing Center for feedback.
- ✓ Proofread one last time.