



Grant Writing 101

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Acknowledgements

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all treaty people.

There are three key components to the statement. The first is particular acknowledgement that the land Dalhousie sits on is part of Mi'kma'ki, the territory of the L'nu'k. The second is the acknowledgement of the territory as both ancestral and unceded — recognizing that the Peace and Friendship treaties signed between the British Crown and the Mi'kmaq (unlike many other historic treaties in Canada) did not involve surrender of land. Finally, “We are all Treaty people” reflects that the Peace and Friendship treaties apply to all parties involved, Indigenous and settler alike.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Having resided in the region for over 400 years, African Nova Scotian contributions to Nova Scotia and Canada began over 150 years before Canada became a country. African Nova Scotians came to the province through enslavement or through fleeing enslavement elsewhere, and continue to experience all manner of structural, systemic and individual discrimination. Until 1961, more than half of all Black people in Canada were African Nova Scotian. The Province of Nova Scotia identifies African Nova Scotians as a founding culture.



Panel Introductions and Structure

Moderator/Presenter:

- Veronica Bacher, Manager, Institutional and International Programs, Office of Research Services



Panelists:

- Dr. Jennifer Bain, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
- Dr. John Archibald, Faculty of Medicine



Structure of the Hour:

1. Setting the Stage
2. Grant Writing
 - Before
 - During
 - After
3. EDIA
4. Questions



Setting the Stage





Before we Begin...



- We (Office of Research Services; ORS) are here for you.
- This presentation includes suggestions and recommendations. Each researcher will approach grant writing in their own way.
- Grant writing has a style and form.
 - You are “selling” your idea, solution, or work.
 - This is considered a proposal.
 - This can be very different than writing a journal article.
- Universities build capacity and knowledge with every grant that is submitted, whether it is successful or not.
- Success rates vary, but one way to increase your personal success rate is to submit more grants.



Before writing your grant



- Consider the fit with the funder
- Consider the fit with the opportunity

1. Sum up the parts

- A frequent error is over-writing an application.
- The “splash page” of most funders does not tell you exactly what you need to include – the application instructions do!
- Register with the funder as soon as you are able.

2. Make a timeline

- If this practice works for you!
- Plan ahead to reduce other stressors (class, family, etc.) while writing.

3. Consider leverage

- You may want to speak to partners, community members, your colleagues, and your Faculty, Department, or School.

4. Fit proposed work into career

- Make this one manageable project within your program of research.

Panel Question: What should researchers consider before writing a grant?



While Writing



- Leave time for internal review 😊

1. Create urgency.
 - Make it relevant.
 - The first paragraph should capture the reader's attention and "pitch" your work, regardless of what that section is called (Introduction, Background, Significance..)
2. Demonstrate Feasibility
3. Action-Oriented Language
4. Consider the Psychology
 - Left-justify.
 - Create white space (if possible!)
 - Summarize the application in points.
 - Make it easy for reviewers to summarize and/or defend your application.
 - Take all the space allocated.
 - Check out the review committee.



While Writing (con'td)



- Leave time for internal review 😊

5. Integrate Highly Qualified Personnel

Ideas for student jobs to support research:

- Library Research (article searches, generation of bibliographies, document requests)
- Conference/Symposium Support
- Computer and Web Skills
- Publication Support
- Fieldwork/Lab work
- Networking/Promotion/Comms
- Information Management

6. Consider citations

- Many applications have unlimited* citation sections.
- Citations are the connection of your ideas to previously established ideas in the field.
- Cite yourself to work in publications from outside the CV cut-off period.

Panel Question: What should researchers consider while writing a grant?

Common Pitfalls

In Reviews

During ORS Review

- Neglecting formatting guidelines
- Asking for budget items that are not eligible
- Inappropriate fit with funder or opportunity

During External Review

- Having more than 3 errors in quick succession
- Using jargon/inaccessible language
- Weak argument
- Non-specific goals and objectives
- “Doing too much”/feasibility

Panel Question: What’s a pitfall that researchers should try to avoid?



After an Application



- Celebrate and recognize your and your team's work!

- What do your colleagues or community partners want to do while you wait?
- What is the feedback?
 - A lot is vague and some is unhelpful.
 - Some may require help interpreting.
- What can you do with this application?
 - Repurpose it
 - Break into smaller parts
 - Use it as a class lecture topic

Panel Question: What should researchers consider after writing a grant?



Embedding EDIA into Grant Applications

- Research Practice
 - HQP recruitment, hiring, training
 - Research environment
- Research Design
- EDIA Training and Education
- Dissemination/Knowledge Mobilization
- Institutional alignment

Resources:

[NFRF EDI Guidelines – see table](#)

[NSERC EDI Guide for Applicants](#)

[CIHR EDI in Proposals](#)

[Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: A Best Practices Guide for Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention](#)



What does this look like in a grant?

- Present concrete strategies
- Relate strategies to team's specific research context
- Identify and remove barriers rather than working around them
- Build EDI support into the project structure and budget
- Show previous commitment to EDI (doing or done vs. will do)



Panel Question: How do you embed EDIA into your grant applications?



**Thanks!
Questions?**

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