

International Graduate Student Support

Proposal Workshop

International Students Grant Funding Sources

1. <http://www.edupass.org/finaid/databases.phtml>.
EduPass: Scholarships for International Students
2. <http://www.foreignborn.com/>.
Foreignborn.com: start with “Student Visas”, then “Study in the US”, then “Financial Aid”
3. Foundation Center at Corporate Services
4. Community of Science – see handout
5. MTU: GTA, GRA
6. Home Country support
7. Foundation support – see handout

How to Write Successful Proposals

The number 1 rule!

Make the job of reading your proposal
as easy and pleasant as possible
for the reviewers.

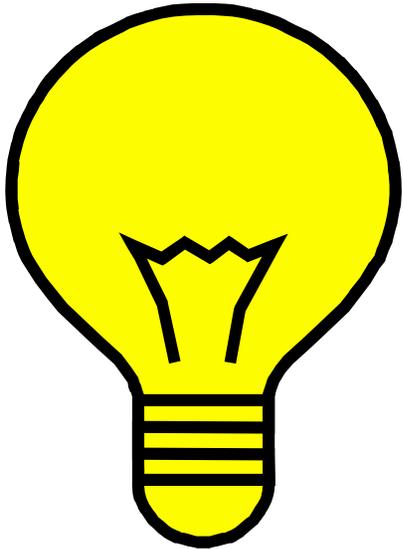
1. Start early

Most RFP's are announced 2 months or more before they are due. There is a reason for that. There is no rule that you must wait until the week before a proposal is due to begin work on it.

2. Follow all instructions exactly.

If something is ambiguous, ask. There is almost always a contact person named in the RFP, and this is part of that person's job.

3. Provide all information requested and answer all questions asked.



Create a list of information requested to make certain you cover everything.

Example of a List - VIGRE

Dissemination:

- Include a plan for dissemination that:
- Describes how this VIGRE project can have a positive impact at the national level on mathematical sciences community
- Provides for broad dissemination of VIGRE activities, experiences, and insights
- Disseminates both successful activities as well as info on less successful activities and mid-course corrections
- Does not exceed 2 pages

4. Organize your narrative:

- ❖ Use headings to define major topics and use the topics identified in the RFP.
- ❖ Make each page look inviting. Nothing is more daunting than a solid page of text.
- ❖ Use white space (even when space is at a premium).
- ❖ Use diagrams, tables, pictures, charts. But keep them simple and understandable.
- ❖ Use bullets and numbered lists.
- ❖ Ask: Do I want to read this?

5. Grammar counts!

- ✓ No misspellings
- ✓ Proper sentences
- ✓ Correct punctuation

6. Your writing style counts

➤ Direct sentences are best.

Example: Key features of the program will promote the integration of research, training, and education of participating students toward the discovery, formulation, and the social diffusion of information through effective research, dissemination, and societal institutionalization of the Sustainable Futures Model.

Better: This project will immerse students in the discovery and understanding of a Sustainable Futures Model. The project will accomplish this in an environment of collaborative teaching, learning, and internship training.

Example:

The research to be undertaken includes.....

Better:

I will conduct research that.....

- Write in the first person (I, we) unless you are directed otherwise.

NSF proposals generally require the Project Summary to be in the 3rd person, but not the rest of the proposal or application.

- Avoid technical jargon when possible. NSF directs that proposals should be written, insofar as possible, for “scientifically or technically literate lay audiences.”
- Avoid phrases like: It is obvious. It is apparent. As previously stated,
- Take out every “very” in your narrative.

- Does what you have written make sense? Read it aloud. Have others read it.

7. Use references and documentation to support your proposal. If the RFP refers you to sources, you should strongly consider using them. Example: ISE
8. Don't say you will do something unless you are certain you can deliver.
9. Pay attention to the review criteria.
10. It is OK to use the same words as are used in the RFP. Don't try to invent new ways to say it. Reflect back the words the funder uses. Example: NSF's broader impacts criterion
11. Is your proposal consistent – no contradictions.

12. Use reviewer's comments to your benefit.
13. Be yourself & show who you are in your writing.
14. Don't be shy about selling yourself!
15. Don't give up. You will improve your proposal and your skills each time.

You can't win if you don't enter!

Proposed Plan of Research

- Clear, concise, original
- Describe research topics you may pursue while on fellowship
- Describe how you became interested
- Must reflect your own thinking & work
- Must demonstrate your understanding of research principles
- Must explain connection to prior research, if any
- Present plan with clear hypothesis
- If no research plan formulated, discuss 1 question that interests you and how you think that question would best be answered.

Proposed Plan of Research:

- Identify research topics you wish to pursue
 - More general first
 - How you became interested
 - Identify your hypothesis: Hypothesis or question(s) that interest you
 - Tell us why this is an important question
 - How it fits in with other research you have done

Proposed Plan of Research:

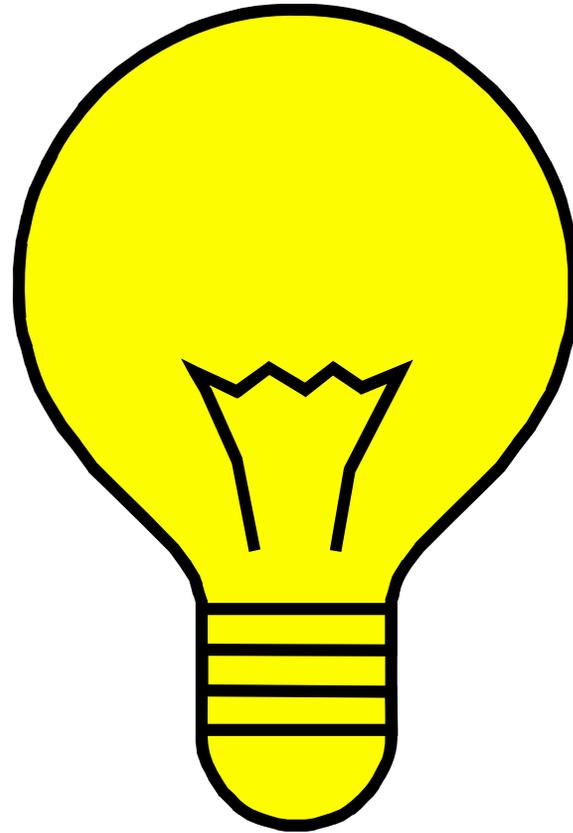
- Present your research plan in a clear, logical progression:
 - Formulate a working hypothesis
 - Identify the experimental procedures to test the hypothesis (research collection methods)
 - Collect data using variety of scientific tools
 - Organize & analyze data. Verify data for accuracy
 - Interpret the data & draw conclusions
 - Communicate the results

Previous Research Experience

- UG, summer, part-time employment, work-study
- Purpose of research and your role – independent or part of team
- Distinguish UG and Graduate research
- If none, describe what prepares you for research
- List any publications or presentations

Ideas, if they work for you:

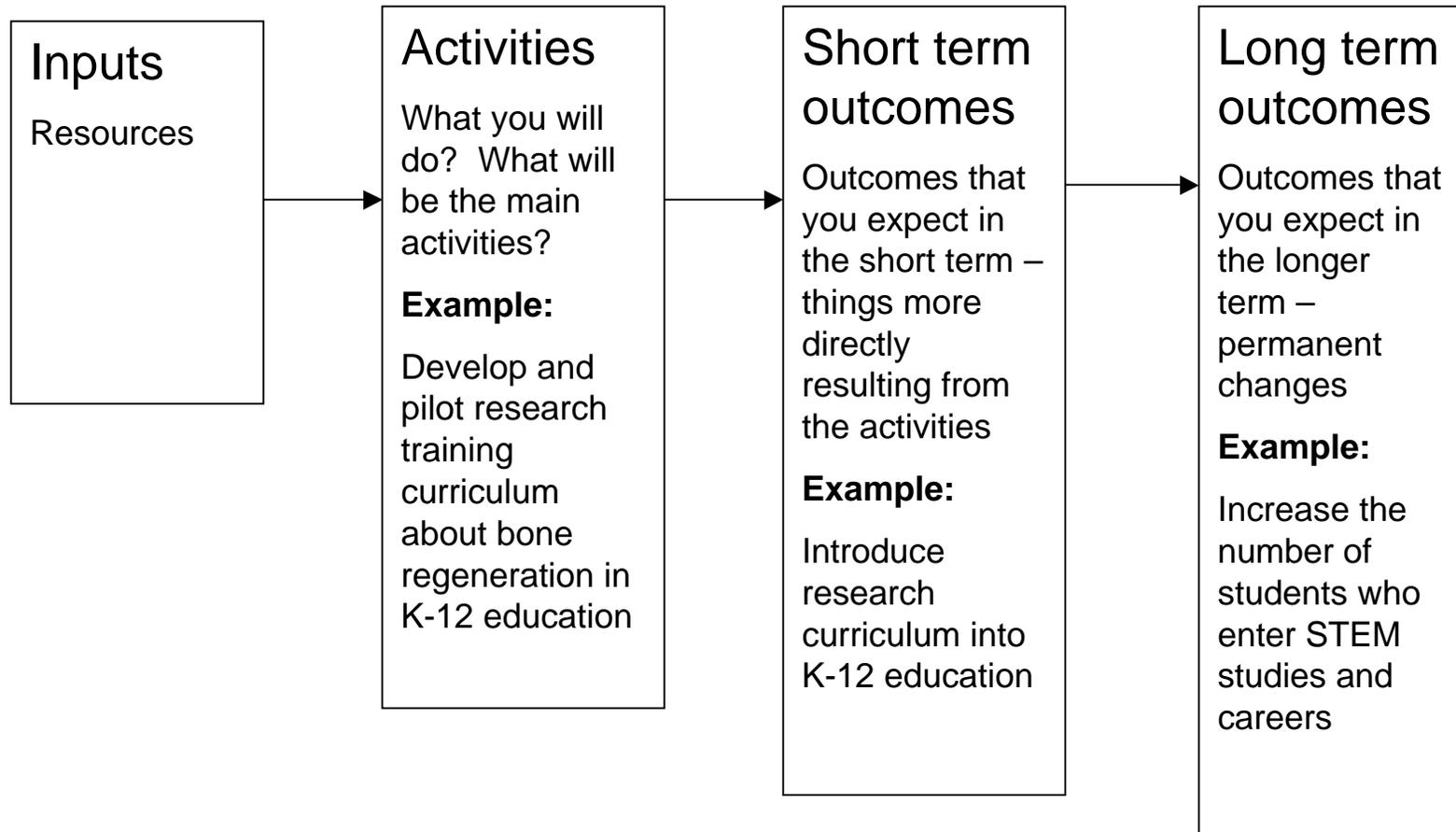
- A timeline
- A Logic Model



Work Plan & Timetable

- This may be part of the Project Design & Activities section.
- If RFP requests a work plan and/or a timetable, provide them.
- Put them in table form so they make sense. Don't create tables that can't be understood.

Logic Model – Basic Form



Logic Model - IGERT

