

Parker Derrington Ltd

33 Dovecot Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7LF
T: 07952 154999
E: enquiries@parkerderrington.com
W: www.parkerderrington.com

Research Grant Writing Workshop

Programme

- – 10:00 Start
- [The Key Sentence Technique](#)
- [The Sales Pitch](#)
- [Sub-projects](#)
- [Aims and Objectives](#)
- [Application-Writing Strategy](#)
- [Do you have a fundable project](#)
 - 11:30-11:45 Coffee
- [Writing Guidelines](#)
- [Why You Need a Magic Formula](#)
- [The Magic Formula](#)
 - 12:30-13:00 Lunch
- [The Key Sentences](#)
- [How the Structure Works](#)
- [Recipe to Create the Magic Formula](#)
 - 14:00-14:15 Tea
- [Goal Sentence Exercise](#)
 - 16:00-Close

Introduction

This workshop is designed to start you working on an extremely efficient 'recipe' for an application for a research project grant, such as a research council standard grant. The morning session is to discuss the things you need to know. The afternoon session is to get you working on the things you need to do to start writing.

If you have a project in mind at the start of the day and you can answer [these questions about it](#), you should have a rough draft of the skeleton of the case for support, in the form of [10 key sentences](#), by the end of the day.

If you don't have a suitable project in mind at the start of the day you can practise the skills of writing the 10 key sentences with a dummy project, or maybe you will be able to formulate something to work with in the morning.

There are two things you need to do to prepare for the workshop.

- First, it is essential for the exercises in the afternoon that you are prepared to write about a research project. Ideally this will be a project for which you intend to write a grant application but you can use a piece of research that you have already done. You can work with a previous grant application - even if it was awarded it will still provide you with suitable material for the workshop, but if it was rejected, even better.
- The workshop is aimed at mainstream UK project funders like the research councils (AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC), the Leverhulme Trust and the Wellcome Trust. It will help if you can identify your target funder before the workshop.
- It's not essential but it will help if you bring a laptop or tablet on which you can type.

My delivery style is interactive, so feel free to ask questions throughout the day. This handout contains all the visual material to be used during the day with clickable links to the main sections in the programme (above) and to the full contents slide-by-slide (below).

Andrew Derrington

Contents

Programme	1
Introduction	1
Do you have a fundable project?	4
Alternative Questions	4
Strategy	4
Should I use a successful application as an example to copy?	5
Writing Guidelines	5
Nominalisations	6
Case for Support as a Sales Pitch	6
Aims & Objectives	7
Sub-projects	7
Why you need a Magic Formula	8
The Case for Support must persuade the funder to fund your project.	8
Grant Funders have Four Questions about the Project	8
Answers to Funders' Questions	9
Which question do you start with?	9
That's how you write a zombie grant...	10
The Decision	10
The Decision: what information do they have?	11
The Decision: what is the process?	11
Implications of the decision process?	12
The Magic Formula	12
The Key Sentence Technique	12
The Key Sentences	13
Use Layout to Communicate with Skimmers and Speed-Readers	14
Teach Terminology with Tag Phrases	14
Tag Phrases in Use	15
Tag Phrases in Red	15
Re-cycle Text From Case for Support	16
Resources	16
The Recipe	16
Sub-goal and Sub-project Sentences	17
Project & Concluding Sentences	17
Goal & Importance	18
Build the Structure	18
Standard Structure	18
Alternative Structures	19
EPSRC Guidance	19
Use Composite Titles to Comply with EPSRC Guidance	21
How the Structure Works	21
Write a Grant in 10 Steps	22
Goal Sentence Exercise	22
The Perfect Goal Sentence	23
The Exercise	23
Programme	25
Programme	25

Do you have a fundable project?

1. Say what your project aims to achieve (the goal) in terms intelligible outside your research discipline.
2. How will your project achieve its goal?
3. Give an example of your success with this research approach.
4. Can you split your goal into three sub-goals?
5. For each sub-goal:-
 - State the sub-goal (ideally as something we need to know).
 - Describe how the research will achieve the sub-goal.
 - Say what makes it important to achieve the sub-goal in the context of the project.
6. What makes the project suitable for the funder (and scheme) you are targeting?
7. Impact
 - Who will benefit most from this research?
 - How will they benefit?
 - What will you do to ensure that they benefit?

If you start writing a grant application without answering these questions, you might never finish.

Alternative Questions

Imagine you got your grant 6 months ago

1. For the current sub-project
 1. What are you actually doing in this sub-project (40 words)?
 2. What outcome will you get?
 3. What makes this outcome important?
2. Repeat for the other 2 sub-projects
3. What will be the overall outcome of the project?
 - What makes the overall method inherently plausible?
 - Have you used the method to produce high quality outputs?
4. What is the significance of the overall outcome?
 1. What will it allow us to do that we cant do now?
 2. Who wants to do that?
5. Which priorities of the funder does the project meet, and how?
6. What must be done to maximise the benefit from the project?

[Back to Programme](#)

Strategy

Your strategy must accommodate the likelihood of rejection

- Most well-written grant applications get rejected.
- Rejection can be a devastating experience

. . .

- If you need a grant, you should plan to write 5 or 6 based on the same set of ideas
- Never get down to your last rejection.
- If you get 6 rejections, it's time to develop a new set of ideas.

. . .

- You need to be able to multiplex grant applications
 - Different Outcomes?
 - Different Datasets?
 - Different Objectives, Same Aims?
- You need to be able to write well and quickly.

[Back to Programme](#)

Should I use a successful application as an example to copy?

- About 75% of funded applications are very badly written
- Apply the following test

. . .

- Can you find single-sentence answers to the following questions in 10 minutes:-
 1. What is the overall aim of the project?
 2. What makes the aim important?
 3. What are the overall research methods?
 4. For each aim or research question (there should be 3 or 4):-
 1. What is the aim or question?
 2. How will the research will answer this question or meet this aim.
 3. What makes it important to answer this question or meet this aim in the context of your project.

. . .

- If you can't, it's a bad example to follow.

[Back to Programme](#)

Writing Guidelines

- No Synonyms
 - Pick the best term and use it repeatedly.

. . .

- No Homonyms

. . .

- Always Tell then Explain
- [Key statement](#) at the start of every section
- Re-use [tag phrases](#) across key statements & in headlines

. . .

- Punchline at top of para (~6 paras per page)
- Start with the 'Topic Sentence' . . .
- Strong Verbs (no adverbs, no [nominalisations](#))

...

- Sentences as Short as Possible
 - How short is “as Short as Possible”
 - [Health Check](#)

...

- Avoid value claims (state evidence instead)

...

- Bullet lists good, lists in sentences bad.

...

- NIUTEIISPOU

...

- – No initialisations unless the expansion is in the same paragraph (or unnecessary)

[Back to Programme](#)

Nominalisations

- A nominalisation is a noun phrase constructed from a verb,

...

- which can be used with a general purpose verb to create a flabby, pompous, long-winded way of saying something simple.

...

- We will investigate X
 - We will carry out an investigation into X
- We will analyse
 - We will undertake an analysis of

Case for Support as a Sales Pitch

- Introduction
 - Global Sales Pitch (Importance Proposition)
 - * Tell them the overall aim & convince them you can deliver it.
 - * Tell them what makes the aim important.
 - Tell them everything that is to come

...

- Detailed Sales Pitch (Success Proposition)

...

- Background/Literature review/Motivation
 - Explains how 3 research outcomes are really important ([KS Sub-goal-1-3](#)).

* Research outcomes can be expressed in terms of AIMS, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, and/or HYPOTHESES.

. . .

- Description of Project/Methods/Research Plan
 - Describes the research activities in each of 3 [sub-projects](#) and makes it clear that they will produce the 3 important outcomes ([KS sub-project-1-3](#)).
 - * Sub-projects can be referred to as “OBJECTIVES” or “WORK PACKAGES”.

. . .

- Matching the background to the description of the project creates a detailed sales pitch

. . .

- You should always match the background to the description of the project, even when they are entries on a form.

The Sales Pitch works best with our [Magic Formula](#)

Aims & Objectives

. . .

- Nobody is sure what Aims & Objectives mean, so you can hijack them to reiterate the sales pitch.

. . .

- Background/Literature review
 - Explains how 3 research outcomes are really important.
 - Make achieving the outcomes the AIMS
 - You could also couch them in terms of hypotheses or research questions.
- Description of Project/Methods/Research Plan
 - Describes the research activities in each of 3 [sub-projects](#) and makes it clear that they will produce the 3 important outcomes.
 - Make the sub-projects the OBJECTIVES.
 - You could also call them Work Packages.

. . .

- The AIMS and OBJECTIVES deliver the sales pitch.
 - [Use Tag Phrases so Aims match Objectives](#)
 - Order them so they match the structure and the wording of the case for support.
 - Always try and give both, even if you are only asked for one.

Sub-projects

What is a sub-project?

- You break your project into components (sub-projects) to make it easier to explain.
 - The sub-projects can be sequential

- Or parallel
- Or even different analyses of the same data
- The only requirement is they produce different, important outcomes.

...

- Each sub-project produces an important outcome
 - Sub-project outcomes match [research goals](#) exactly.
 - * You use the research goals to structure the background of the case for support.

...

- - That way the explainer will give your sales pitch.
 - Because they will have read the background before the description of the project.

...

- The perfect number of sub-projects is 3, but 4 is OK.

...

- Don't create hostages.
 - Sub-projects that depend on uncertain research outcomes.

Why you need a Magic Formula

What a Grant Application has to Achieve

Andrew Derrington

The Case for Support must persuade the funder to fund your project.

1. [What do funders want?](#)
 - This tells you what information the Case for Support must include.
2. [How do funders make decisions](#)
 - This tells you the requirements for the Case for Support.
 - [It needs a magic formula.](#)
 - [The Magic Formula](#)

[Back to Programme](#)

Grant Funders have Four Questions about the Project

1. IS THE PROJECT IMPORTANT (to Them)?
 - Direct Outcomes (discoveries)
 - Indirect Outcomes (training, career development, mobility...)
2. WILL THE PROJECT BE SUCCESSFUL?
 - Will it produce the direct outcomes?
 - Will they be put to use?
 - Will it produce the indirect outcomes?

3. ARE THE APPLICANTS COMPETENT?

- Can they carry out the project?
- Can their institution support it?

4. WOULD A GRANT BE VALUE for MONEY?

- Are the resources requested Necessary, Sufficient, and Proportionate (for the project)

[Back to Programme](#)

Answers to Funders' Questions

- IMPORTANCE (evidence)
 - Evidence about direct outcomes in literature review
 - Evidence about indirect outcomes in details of project, institutions, & investigators
- SUCCESS (project details)
 - Research activities in relation to outcomes?
 - Impact and dissemination plans.
- COMPETENCE (evidence)
 - Evidence that the team has the necessary skills in publications (quality and authorship).
 - Evidence that PI and institution can deliver the project in track record & facilities.
- VALUE for MONEY (project details)
 - Mention how grant resources will be used in the project.
 - Mention institutional resources needed for the project.

[Back to Programme](#)

Which question do you start with?

- IMPORTANCE?
 - Pick an important question
 - * Start the literature review
 - *

[Back to Programme](#)

That's how you write a zombie grant...



- If the description of the research is less than 50% of the case for support it is probably a 'zombie'.

The Decision

...

- Who decides?

...

- Committee of successful researchers
 - Very busy people
 - Very successful

- * Have their own grants
- * And research groups
- * And jobs
- Not knowledgeable about your particular research area.
- May have 'user' representation
- Supported by secretariat

The Decision: what information do they have?

- Applications
 - Usually a set of 50-100 per meeting.
 - Arrive 3-6 weeks before meeting.
 - Everybody delays reading them as long as possible.
- . . .
- Expert referees' reports
 - Written reports with evaluation and score.
 - Usually 2-5 per application
 - Usually arrive before the meeting but often after the applications
 - Often conflicting
- . . .
- Designated members' reports
 - Oral report by 2 or 3 members who have read the application.
 - Usually lasts < 5 minutes

The Decision: what is the process?

- Designated members report on the proposal
 - Usually less than 5 minutes
 - Who, what, why, how, outcomes, strengths, weaknesses, summary of referees, how important and exciting, suggested score
 - One person may have to do this for 10 or more grants in a day.
 - Probably based on 30-60 minutes preparation.
- . . .
- Discussion by all members of the committee.
 - Even though some of them may be reading it for the first time during the discussion.
 - * They will probably have read the summary beforehand.
- . . .
- All members in the discussion can influence the score.
 - No matter how little they know.
 - And how little time they have spent reading your proposal.

Implications of the decision process?

- Referees will analyse your case for support in detail but:-
 - Most of the committee won't read it.
 - The ones who do read it probably won't understand it.
 - There will be about 100 other applications.
 - This imposes requirements on the case for support.

...

-
- It must make it very clear that your project
 - is important, and
 - will be successful
-
- and it must be easy:-
 - To analyse it at a deep level (Referee).
 - To know what's in it by skimming it (Committee Member).
 - For an outsider to understand its importance (Committee Member).
 - To grasp the big picture and remember the details (Designated Member).

...

-
- To endow your case for support with these properties you may need a [Magic Formula](#)

The Magic Formula

- [The Key Sentence Technique](#)
- [Key Sentences](#)
- [Layout](#)
- [Tag Phrases](#)
- [Repetition](#)

The Key Sentence Technique

...

- Create a skeleton of about ten '*key sentences*' that state the main points of the Case for Support.

...

- - the overall research goal,
 - what makes the goal important,
 - the sub-goals
 - the sub-projects that deliver the sub-goals

– etc

. . .

-
- Use the key sentences as an organising framework for writing the Case for Support,

. . .

- – Each key sentence is the first sentence of a subsection of the Case for Support
 - * Rest of the subsection develops the point

. . .

- Use the key sentences as the Summary

. . .

- and as the Introduction.

. . .

-
- Every Reader gets the same picture, no matter what they read

. . .

- – Summary only
- First few lines of the case for support
- Every word of the case for support.

The Magic Formula

The Key Sentences

The 10 sentence skeleton of a case for support

1. **Goal:** States overall goal of project (AIM, Research Question, Hypothesis)
2. **Importance** Says what makes the overall goal important
3. **Sub-goal-1:** States G_1 (& why it is important)
4. **Sub-goal-2:** States G_2 (& why it is important)
5. **Sub-goal-3:** States G_3 (& why it is important)
6. **Project:** Introduces the project.
7. **Sub-project-1:** Says how sub-project 1 will deliver G_1
8. **Sub-project-2:** Says how sub-project 2 will deliver G_2
9. **Sub-project-3:** Says how sub-project 3 will deliver G_3
10. **Concluding:** Says what happens after the project. - Depends on funder & **Importance**.
11. Some funders require section on track record & environment
 - Add a key sentence saying what achievement demonstrates each important skill
 - And a key sentence describing each major component of infrastructure

The Magic Formula

Use Layout to Communicate with Skimmers and Speed-Readers

- Message on first line of paragraph (ASSERT then JUSTIFY)
 - First sentence of para ASSERTS (topic sentence)
 - Remainder of para JUSTIFIES
 - * This is where you cite literature
 - * This is how you avoid citing too much literature.

...

- White space above each paragraph

...

- Readers' eye movements land on blank lines.
 - Speed-readers will read first line of every paragraph.
 - Browsers will only read first lines.
 - Detail readers will know what to expect in each para

Programme

Teach Terminology with Tag Phrases

Sub-goal-1, Sub-goal-2 & Sub-goal-3 Key Sentences

- 'We need to know' + tag phrase because....
- We need to know the relationship between the performance of single neurons and the performance of the whole visual system in order to establish the likely contribution of single neurons to perception.

...

Sub-project-1, Sub-project-2 & Sub-project-3 Key Sentences

- 'We will do this sub-project in order to discover' + tag phrase
- We will record single neurons during perceptual tasks and calculate sensitivity functions for neural responses and for task performance in order to characterise the relationship between the performance of single neurons and the performance of the whole visual system.

...

- Tag phrases provide meaning - link between aims and objectives
- Use them in headings (make them short enough)
- Key sentences and tag phrases start off messy and long-winded, like these.

...

- You have to edit them to make them effective.

Programme

Tag Phrases in Use

The perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1

We need to know the perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1 in order to establish the potential contribution of V1 to perception. The potential contribution can be assessed using a range of perceptual tasks, such as visual pattern discrimination, object discrimination, and motion-detection. For any such task, we can infer the contribution of cortical area V1 to that task from the relationship between the perceptual capabilities of single neurons and the perceptual capabilities of the individual.

This is the start of a sub-section of the background. There will be a couple of pages of text (at least 3 subsections, each with its own heading) between it and the start of the corresponding sub-section of the description of the project, which follows here.

Measuring the perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1

We will measure how neural response varies with stimulus strength during perceptual tasks in order to measure the perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1. Stimuli from a set that covers a range of strengths will be presented repeatedly in random sequences under computer control. The computer will record responses during the presentations, and during equivalent periods when no stimulus is presented, for off-line spike sorting and analysis.....

[Magic Formula](#)

Tag Phrases in Red

The perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1

We need to know the perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1 in order to establish the potential contribution of V1 to perception. The potential contribution can be assessed using a range of perceptual tasks, such as visual pattern discrimination, object discrimination, and motion-detection. For any such task, we can infer the contribution of cortical area V1 to that task from the relationship between the perceptual capabilities of single neurons and the perceptual capabilities of the individual.

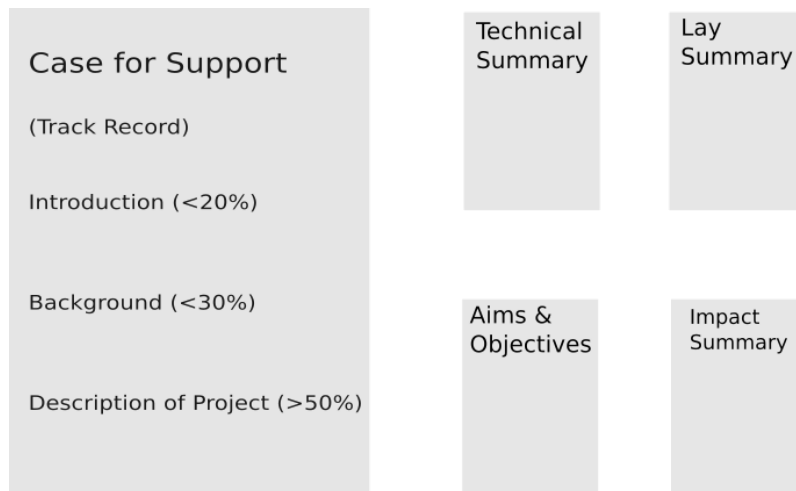
This is the start of a sub-section of the background. There will be a couple of pages of text (at least 3 subsections, each with its own heading) between it and the start of the corresponding sub-section of the description of the project, which follows here.

Measuring the perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1

We will measure how neural response varies with stimulus strength during perceptual tasks in order to measure the perceptual capabilities of single neurons in cortical area V1. Stimuli from a set that covers a range of strengths will be presented repeatedly in random sequences under computer control. The computer will record responses during the presentations, and during equivalent periods when no stimulus is presented, for off-line spike sorting and analysis.....

[Magic Formula](#)

Re-cycle Text From Case for Support



- Repeat key sentences and tag phrases
 - to provide common structure, and
 - to link
- Maintain structure and order

Programme

Resources

What's been funded?

- Research Council Project Summaries
 - <http://gtr.rcuk.ac.uk>
- ERC Summaries
- Leverhulme Awards 2016

Advice on writing:- www.parkerderrington.com/blog

- How to construct a project
- The key sentences
- Catalogue

Magic Formula

Back to Start

The Recipe

- Make sure you have a fundable project
- Prepare your Ingredients
 - Success Proposition

- Project Intro & Outtro
- Importance Proposition
- Assemble the Case for Support
- Write a Grant in 10 Steps

Sub-goal and Sub-project Sentences

- **Sub-project:** Sentences “This will tell us” (One per Subproject)
 - Says how a sub-project will achieve a SUB-GOAL.
 - “We will do the research in the sub-project to achieve the SUB-GOAL”
 - States an OBJECTIVE or Work Package (and the SUB-GOAL it will deliver).
-
- ...
- **Sub-goal** Sentences: “We need to know” (One per subproject)
 - Say what a SUB-GOAL consists of (& why it’s important)
 - “We need to achieve a SUB-GOAL for whatever reason”
 - Structures the Background: Introduces a subsection
 - Sub-Goal can be expressed in terms of Aim, Research Question, and/or Hypothesis
 - * Only use more than one term if the funder does (e.g. ESRC does)
 - * Make it clear that the terms you use are synonymous - e.g. “Our aims are to answer the following research questions...”
-
- ...
- Rookie mistakes
 - Changing the wording that describes the sub-goal between **sub-goal** and **sub-project** sentences
 - Failing to mention research activities in **sub-project** sentences
 - Describing the research activities instead of outcomes in **sub-goal** Sentences
 - Changing the syntactic structure unnecessarily.

Example

Project & Concluding Sentences

Project

- **Project** sentence summarises the project in whatever way is appropriate
 - If they only read 1 sentence about your project, it will be this one. What do you want it to say?

Concluding Sentence

- Introduces your discussion of what will happen after the research is complete
- It will depend to a certain extent on whether the importance is academic or practical or both.

- e.g. State in about 40 words what you will do to maximise the benefit from the project.

Goal & Importance

The Elevator Pitch (Makes the Importance Proposition)

1. **Goal** Sentence should have 3 parts:-

1. What the project will achieve, in 'big picture' terms.
2. How it will achieve it (your research approach).
3. An example of your achievements using that approach, to show you are competent.

. . .

- EG:

- This project will develop a potential treatment for stroke, using an in vitro brain slice model to optimise synthetic metabolic inhibitors discovered in my laboratory.

. . .

2. **Importance** sentence says what it is that makes the outcome important. For example...

1. Quantify the real-world problem it will help to solve.
2. Say what it will allow us to do that we can't do now.
3. Prepare to say which named priorities of your funder it contributes to, and how?

. . .

- EG

- Caring for the 1.2 million UK stroke survivors costs over £1.7 billion a year.

Build the Structure

- [Standard Structure: Key sentences as Introduction and Skeleton](#)
- [Variations](#)
- [EPSRC Guidance](#)
- [Suggested Structure for EPSRC](#)

Standard Structure

1. Introduction - Key Sentences 1-10, (Write this Last)

- May express **Sub-goal** key sentences as research questions, aims or hypotheses
- May express **sub-project** key sentences (& **Project** and **Concluding**) as Objectives.

▪

2. Background - 4 subsections - sells the project outcomes. (Write this after Methods)

- **Importance** Say what makes the overall outcome important.
 - Then justify in detail
- **Sub-goal-1-Sub-goal-3** Say why we need each research outcome (AIMS) & add detail after each

▪

3. Methods. Describes the Project (Write this First)
 - **Project** Summarise the project. Then add detail.
 - **sub-project-1-sub-project-3** Summarise each sub-project (OBJECTIVE) & the AIM it achieves. Add detail after each.
 - **Concluding** Say what happens after the project (impact?). Then add detail.
 -
4. A separate section on track record is required by some funders (e.g. MRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, NERC) Write this anytime.

Alternative Structures

Some funders specify weird requirements but these can usually be addressed by one of three approaches.

...

1. Renaming components - e.g. Methods may be called 'Research Plan & Methodology', 'Description of the Project' etc.

...

2. Moving sub-components around
 - e.g. BBSRC require you to introduce the 'Research Plan and Methodology' with the Overall Aim & Specific Objectives. Can do this by having separate introductions for the Background & Methods sections.

...

3. Using composite titles to avoid repetition
 - e.g. ESRC ask both for aims and for research questions: call each aim a research question.
 - EPSRC ask for 4 sections covering same topic 'Background', 'National Importance', 'Academic Impact' and 'Research Hypotheses & Objectives' [solution here](#)

EPSRC Guidance

- Previous Track Record (up to 2 sides)
- Description of proposed research and its context (6 sides)
 - Background
 - * Introduce topic and explain academic and industrial context
 - * Demonstrate understanding of related work
 - [National importance](#)
 - * Contribution to other disciplines, economy & society.
 - * Long term effects; relation to national strategic needs.
 - * Fit with UK research & EPSRC's [portfolio, research areas & strategy](#).
 - Academic Impact
 - * Describe academic impact
 - * Explain collaborations; justify Visiting Researchers
 - Research Hypothesis and Objectives
 - * Set out your research idea or hypothesis
 - * Explain why the proposed project is novel and timely
 - * Identify the overall aims of the project, and the measurable objectives

- Programme and Methodology
 - * Detail and justify research methodology
 - * Describe the work programme & milestones for each member of the team,
 - * Explain how the project will be managed.

Use Composite Titles to Comply with EPSRC Guidance

1. Track Record
 - You probably don't need 2 pages: use some of it for pilot data
2. Background
 - Aim, Research Hypothesis and Objectives. This is a standard introduction that uses all the key sentences in order. The only difference is that it appears as the first subsection of the background rather than as a section in its own right. It should use terms like 'hypothesis', 'aim' and 'objective' either in the key sentences or in linking text.
 - National Importance and Academic Impact Subsection. This and everything that follows is the same as the standard structure. It uses the **Importance** Sentence followed by details that meet EPSRC guidance.
 - **Sub-goal-1** sentence & subsection;
 - **Sub-goal-2** sentence & subsection;
 - **Sub-goal-3** sentence & subsection;
3. Programme and Methodology. Everything is exactly the same as the standard methods section.
 - **Project** sentence & subsection;
 - **Sub-project-1**
 - **Sub-project-2**
 - **Sub-project-3**
 - **Concluding**; Sentence & Subsection
 - Give milestones and explain how the project will be managed.

How the Structure Works

(Key Sentence Names are **Bold Font**)

...

1. Introduction (summarises whole case for support using all key sentences)
 - **Goal, Importance, 3 Sub-goals, Project, 3 Sub-projects & Concluding**

...

2. Background (Literature review=> GOAL is Important; Subgoals are criteria for success)
 - **Importance:** Sells GOAL => *IMPORTANCE PROPOSITION*
 - **Sub-goal-1:** Explains & Sells G_1
 - **Sub-goal-2:** Explains & Sells G_2
 - **Sub-goal-3:** Explains & Sells G_3

...

3. Methods / Research Programme (Project is value for money & will be successful)
 - **Project:** Introduces the project.
 - **Sub-project-1:** How sub-project 1 will deliver G_1
 - **Sub-project-2:** How sub-project 2 will deliver G_2
 - **Sub-project-3:** How sub-project 3 will deliver G_3
 - Mention resources used in research => *VALUE for MONEY PROPOSITION*
 - Explain how Project delivers Subgoals => *SUCCESS PROPOSITION*

- **Concluding:** Says what happens after the project.
 - Expectations depend on funder & on importance proposition.

...

4. Some funders require section on track record & environment
 - Track record demonstrates all necessary skills
 - Environment describes all necessary infrastructure & support
 - => *COMPETENCE PROPOSITION*

Write a Grant in 10 Steps

1. You can start as soon as you have thought of a viable project.
2. Check that the project is suitable for your chosen funder and funding scheme.
3. Divide the project into sub-projects and assemble the information you need to describe them and justify them.
4. At this stage you should be able to initiate the costing process & institutional approvals in parallel with the writing.
5. Draft your Key sentences in this order:-
 - i. *Sub-project* sentences.
 - ii. *Sub-goal* sentences.
 - iii. *Project* and *Concluding* Sentences
 - iv. *Importance* sentence.
 - v. *Goal* sentence

If you will need a summary for a lay audience you should begin working to prepare and test it at this stage.

6. Use the key sentences as the skeleton and write the subsections of the case for support.
7. Add any funder-specific information or sections to the case for support.
8. Draft any required information on the project timetable and project management.
9. Assemble the budget and write the Justification of Resources
10. Finalise any attachments and summaries you need to submit.

Goal Sentence Exercise

Why is the first sentence important?

...

- It has to be good enough to make the reader read on
- They will have 99 other applications.
 - They know most of them are headed for the shredder.
- They also have a TV.
- What will make them want to read your application?

...

1. A project that is likely to advance an important area of knowledge.
2. A project that is likely to be successful.
3. Evidence that you are competent to carry out the project.

The Perfect Goal Sentence

Three Elements

. . .

1. What the project will achieve, in 'big picture' terms.
 - A project that is likely to advance an important area of knowledge.

. . .

2. How it will achieve it (your research approach).
 - A project that is likely to be successful.

. . .

3. An example of your achievements using that approach.
 - Evidence that you are competent to carry out the project.

The Exercise

1. Interview your neighbour (3 mins)
2. Swap roles and interview again (3 mins)
3. Write a sentence for your neighbour's project (2 mins)
4. Write a Sentence for your own Project (2 mins)
5. Optimise and discuss.

. . .

Interview to get information for the sentence that you want to write:-

1. What the project will achieve, in 'big picture' terms.
2. How it will achieve it (your research approach).
3. An example of your achievements using that approach.

Research Goals

Presenter



Andrew Derrington has in-depth experience of the research funding process. He obtained his first research grant, a Beit Memorial Fellowship for Medical Research, while he was writing his PhD. His research was continuously funded by fellowships, project and programme grants for the next 30 years. He served on research grant committees for The Science and Engineering Research Council, the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust. His book, *The Research Funding Toolkit*, which he co-wrote with Jacqueline Aldridge, research and enterprise associate in the School of Psychology at the University of Kent, is the definitive guide to grant writing for early career academics and research professionals. It is based on Andrew's analysis of how grants committees make funding decisions.

Andrew has worked in eight Universities including two in the world top ten.

He has also worked as a journalist. Over several years he wrote two successful columns in the Financial Times. *The Nature of Things* covered science - from astrophysics to zoology. *Psych Yourself Up* was a guide to the different psychotherapies available in the UK.

Andrew set up [Parker Derrington Ltd](#) in 2013. He now works as a consultant, writing research grant applications and providing strategic advice and training to individuals and organizations.

Testimonials

I had a fantastically useful time attending your recent workshop at Leicester University. Writing the 10 key sentences was a very useful exercise and I have, since, worked on them to discover they are a fab tool for any kind of writing really.

Dr Ranjana Das, University of Leicester

Andrew blends easy authority and extensive experience with humour and approachability. The result is a workshop full of practical, memorable advice on how to compete more successfully for research funding.

Professor Peter Clegg, Institute of Ageing and Chronic Disease, University of Liverpool

I attended one of Andrew's workshops when I was a senior lecturer. The hands on advice about how to structure my applications in a really appealing fashion enabled me to win a grant of nearly £600K the next year. I still implement the advice that I received in that workshop, and pass it down to junior colleagues. I find that Andrew's advice has a high success rate!

Prof Theresa Gannon, University of Kent

I still use the tips you gave me for my successful Wellcome SRF application. Your advice on "12 key sentences" is spot-on and helps people focus on the aspects of the proposal that are critical to success instead of getting bogged down in reams of text.

Prof Mark Baxter, Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Andrew's grant-writing workshops teach you how to convince the world that it needs your research. They are the most useful training events I have ever attended. His advice about how to sell the big idea without compromising on the science was critical to the success of our £9.3 million ESRC application.

Prof Julian Pine, University of Liverpool

Programme

- The Key Sentence Technique
- The Sales Pitch
- Sub-projects
- Aims and Objectives
- Application-Writing Strategy
- Do you have a fundable project
- Writing Guidelines
- Why You Need a Magic Formula
- The Magic Formula
- The Key Sentences
- How the Structure Works
- Recipe to Create the Magic Formula
- Goal Sentence Exercise

Programme

Morning: Things you Need to Know

- The Key Sentence Technique
- The Sales Pitch
- Sub-projects
- Aims and Objectives
- Application-Writing Strategy
- Do you have a fundable project
- Writing Guidelines
- Why You Need a Magic Formula
- The Magic Formula

Afternoon: Exercises

- The Key Sentences
- How the Structure Works
- Recipe to Create the Magic Formula
- Goal Sentence Exercise

16:00 Close